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In Pictures

The global game caught on camera

New York/New Jersey...players of Spain and Argentina react as the whistle blows at the end of the World Cup final

Dallas...Lamine Yamal acknowledges Cristiano Ronaldo after Spain knock out Portugal in the round of 16

New York/New Jersey...Brazil players attempt to console Neymar after their last-16 exit at the hands of Norway

Kansas City...Breel Embolo pleads with the referee after VAR intervenes to send the Switzerland striker off in their quarter-final clash v Argentina

Seattle...Romelu Lukaku cups his ears after scoring in Belgium's victory over the United States in the last 16

Atlanta... tempers flare in the feisty semi-final tie between England and Argentina

New York/New Jersey... Lionel Messi watches on as Spain lift the World Cup trophy

Mexico City...Dan Burn heads the ball away from England's penalty area after a Raul Jimenez bicycle kick attempt

Boston...fans of Norway perform their iconic Viking Row celebration during their group-stage clash with France

Miami...Sidny Lopes Cabral curls in a stunning strike during Cape Verde's last-32 showdown with Argentina

Boston...Paraguay's Orlando Gill celebrates after Jonathan Tah blazes his penalty over the bar as Germany are eliminated in a World Cup shootout for the first time

Mexico City...Ecuador's Piero Hincapie becomes the second player of the tournament to be red carded for covering his mouth while speaking to an opponent during a confrontation

New York/New Jersey...France's attacking unit of Bradley Barcola, Kylian Mbappe, Michael Olise and Ousmane Dembele celebrate during their 3-0 victory against Sweden

OVERVIEW

THE REIGN OF SPAIN

La Roja match the Class of 2010 by adding the World Cup to their European crown

All World Cups are unique, with their own narrative from ambition to bid to execution. The first triple staging with the expanded field of 48 teams and 104 matches was appropriate to a central host which boasts of being biggest and best. Biggest World Cup, certainly. But best? Demonstrably not.

***Campeones*...Spain captain Rodri lifts the World Cup trophy**

Football memory will cherish only a handful of matches amid the inevitable diminution of quality sliced into 23-minute slices by the advert-stuffed, momentum-busting hydration breaks.

All manner of records were generated, largely due to the tournament's expansion, but it would be ungracious not to hail the achievements of Lionel Messi and Cristiano Ronaldo in appearing at, and in the latter's case scoring in, their record sixth World Cups. Their achievements illustrate the preparatory advances supporting physical and mental fitness. Millionaire contracts play a role but it takes an exceptionally competitive mind to invite kick after kick in endless pursuit of a dream.

In football no dreams are greater than competing in and winning the World Cup. The ultimate achievement is granted to very few, as Didier Deschamps told his French winners in 2018: "Whatever your career now, you will always be world champions and no-one can ever take that away from you."

This is now the boast of Spain's generation of 2026. Aptly their World Cup winner from 2010, Andres Iniesta, had been entrusted with presenting before kick-off the trophy Spain would win a second time. For Iniesta 2010 read Ferran Torres 2026.

As the final ran on, goalless, so Spain may have feared joining the ranks of undeserved losers. Instead, Enzo Fernandez helped them over the line by mindlessly wiping out Pau Cubarsi to earn his second yellow card and the red that left the outgoing champions with ten men for the finale. Make that nine men effectively since this time Messi, on his farewell, was merely a walking-pace spectator.

Spain's triumph was a major plus to take from a tournament whose legacy is tarnished by the image of a governing body in FIFA whose ability to generate $15 billion in record revenues was matched by its inability to leaven the imposition by President Donald Trump's administration of its own standards, or lack of them.

History will not pardon Gianni Infantino. Every FIFA president must deal in sycophancy towards the World Cup host – Vladimir Putin, Emir of Qatar or even Trump – but not idolatry.

Infantino's award to Trump of an ill-conceived peace prize, his alignment with the so-called Board of Peace for Gaza, were followed by the insult of African players enduring tarmac searches on arrival and an Iran team having to squeeze their matches between return flights to their Mexican exile. The nadir was reached with FIFA kowtowing to Trump over the red card suspension of United States forward Folarin Balogun. National security was not an issue. An embarrassed Balogun was strictly a football issue.

Already the airs had been disturbed by visa bars, contrary to the hosting contract, on fans from Haiti, Iran, Senegal and Ivory Coast and even Somali referee Omar Artan. Ramped-up hotel prices are a World Cup standard but FIFA's endorsement of dynamic ticket pricing was a cynical exploitation of fans' willingness to pay anything to follow their team.

Environmentalists weighed in over the carbon emissions generated by all the air miles but football must always roll with that punch. Infantino's private jet traversed 50,000-plus miles – not counting a condolences hop to Qatar after the death of the old Emir – but he would ascribe that to merely his presidential duties.

The group stage he busily overflew ran smoothly across the three co-hosts with enthusiastic crowds in Canada and the US, while the most traditional football experience engulfed the Estadio Azteca in Mexico City where a celebratory spirit overcame a sometimes-chaotic local organisation.

Few group surprises, apart from the embarrassingly early exits of Uruguay, Turkey and South Korea, while the competition narrative was enlivened by the brave displays of Cape Verde and Curacao and even point-less Haiti.

The manner in which they seized their opportunity provided FIFA with vindication for the 48-team expansion. All the FIFA minnows were told that you too can live the dream. The argument will be endorsed by CONMEBOL in seeking 64 teams for the centenary finals in 2030.

That nine of the ten African teams made it to the knockout stages compared with only two from Asia owed much to FIFA's relaxation of player qualification rules plus an outreach to the diaspora; most players in the African squads were drawn from the European clubs in which they gained their football education. This was a trick unavailable to the Asian teams, albeit Japan and South Korea were betrayed by complacency and self-delusion.

The knockout stages also proceeded mostly as forecast with the notable exceptions of Germany and maybe Netherlands in the round of 32, then Brazil and Portugal in the last 16. The true balance of power in international football was then illustrated by the quarter-finals line-up with six European teams, one South American nation and one from Africa, before the top four in the FIFA rankings turned up in the semi-finals.

"This is the greatest human, social and cultural event mankind has ever witnessed. For this I thank you. One country will be world champion but the world has already won, America has won, FIFA has won"

Gianni Infantino to Donald Trump on the eve of the final

Moment of madness...Argentina midfielder Enzo Fernandez is sent off in the final

Iniesta's heir ...Ferran Torres celebrates scoring in the World Cup final

Refereeing controversies are unavoidable but a high level of dissatisfaction stemmed from an expectation that VAR should resolve controversy not exacerbate it, in particular around violent conduct.

Refereeing supremo Pierluigi Collina should reassess a system that threw up Uzbekistan's Ilgiz Tantashev (France v Paraguay), Australia's Alireza Faghani (France v Senegal and England v Mexico), Honduras' Said Martinez (Belgium v Senegal and England v Ghana) as well as Brazil's returning Wilton Sampaio (Netherlands v Morocco).

Semi-final officials Ivan Barton from El Salvador and American Ismail Elfath were always on a hiding to nothing as the correct winners progressed. France proved again that a team who start like a train run out of steam towards the end of the line, with the only consolation being Kylian Mbappe's Golden Boot; Spain illustrated the opposite, that slow starters can build up to their best when it matters most.

Shower of gold...Donald Trump and Gianni Infantino after presenting the World Cup trophy

Elfath should have dealt with Argentina's head-cracking strategy in the other semi, but ultimately England were beaten not only by two late Messi-inspired goals but by manager Thomas Tuchel's second-half loss of nerve after Anthony Gordon's breakthrough. England had only themselves to blame despite achieving their best outcome in 60 years. The chaotically-entertaining 6-4 defeat of France in the third-place play-off improved on defeats there in 1990 (to Italy) and 2018 (Belgium).

One day later, the World Cup returned to reality in front of a capacity-crowd of 80,663 in East Rutherford's MetLife Stadium in New Jersey.

As expected, Spain dominated first-half possession. But they could not capitalise, with Lamine Yamal's under-hit shot after darting in from the right wing the best chance of the opening 45 minutes. As the final ran on, so Spanish fears must have grown that they might pay a fatal penalty.

Luis de la Fuente's team were superbly commanded from midfield by their captain Rodri who enjoyed one of those monumental games for which a player of even the highest calibre must dream. Dani Olmo was a nimble and willing aide, until Argentina stamped, literally, on his inventive spirit.

Slovenian referee Slavko Vincic, perhaps in deference to the occasion, restrained himself from waving one or two early yellow cards as he would certainly have done in the Champions League.

The much-derided Super Bowl half-time show/break suited Argentina more than Spain. They reorganised and displayed a newly-discovered attacking intensity, but not for long. Once Rodri had shrugged off the effects of a crunching gesture of introduction from incoming Leandro Paredes so Spain reclaimed control.

Crucially amid all of this Enzo Fernandez, booked earlier for dissent, sent Pau Cubarsi flying and was sent off.

Argentina, with nine men camped around their box while Messi acted as a walking spectator in the centre circle, had nothing for which to play but penalties. Barely had the second half of extra-time begun when that ambition was curtailed. Pedro Porro crossed, Nico Williams turned the ball back superbly and fellow substitute Ferran Torres thumped in a left-footed winner.

The final whistle was greeted with joyous celebrations from the Spanish players and petulant anger from the Argentines, led by the combustible Paredes, whose tussles with Eric Garcia and Gavi will surely see him face disciplinary action.

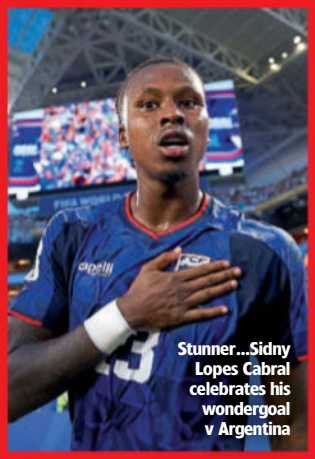
At least the World Cup, at the end of a testing and tainted six weeks, had crowned worthy champions.

Keir Radnedge

GOALS we'd like to see again

1 Sidny Lopes CABRAL
Argentina v CAPE VERDE
As a football spectator, there are few better feelings than seeing a goal live that you know will be replayed for decades. Julian Alvarez was clearly watching, as he produced a passable imitation for Argentina in their quarter-final v Switzerland.

2 Mostafa ZICO
Argentina v EGYPT
The greatest disallowed goal in World Cup history? Quite possibly. Not for Zico's finish, assured as it was, but for the thrilling run by Haissem Hassan along the right wing to initiate the move. The VAR intervention to rule it out felt especially cruel.



Stunner...Sidny Lopes Cabral celebrates his wondergoal v Argentina

3 Erling HAALAND
Brazil v NORWAY
A goal that was special for its rarity as much as its quality; Haaland scored as many goals from outside the box at this World Cup as he did during the entire 2025-26 season for Manchester City.

4 Eldor SHOMURODOV
DR Congo v UZBEKISTAN
One of four nations making their World Cup debut, point-less Uzbekistan didn't have too much to cheer, but this goal was special. Running onto a chipped through ball, their captain audaciously lobbed the keeper from an acute angle.

5 Jude BELLINGHAM
France v ENGLAND
It felt fitting that England's World Cup campaign ended with their outstanding player scoring an outstanding solo goal – and against the country of Zinedine Zidane, his predecessor in Real Madrid's No.5 shirt.

2026 WORLD CUP AWARDS

Final Man of the Match: Ferran Torres *(Spain)*
FIFA Young Player: Pau Cubarsi *(Spain)*
Golden Glove: Unai Simon *(Spain)*
Golden Ball: Rodri *(Spain)*
Golden Boot: Kylian Mbappe *(France)* – 10 goals

Top scorer...Kylian Mbappe sealed the Golden Boot in the third-place play-off

MESSI'S WORLD CUP STORY

'IN THE RACE BETWEEN THE ATHLETE AND TIME, THERE IS ONLY EVER ONE WINNER'

Lionel Messi's World Cup career appears to be over after a roller-coaster ride of highs and lows representing Argentina

As he tearfully surveyed the stands of the New Jersey Stadium after Argentina's World Cup final defeat to Spain, there could well have been some conflicting emotions swirling around the head of Lionel Messi.

One, of course, would have been the pain of defeat. Messi did what he could to organise a very late rally, but the superiority of the Spanish side was undeniable. They controlled the entire game, and could easily have won by a margin far greater than 1-0. And it was the very distance between the two sides that may have provoked another emotion in Messi – the sorrow of parting. Going into the game there was plenty of speculation that, playing well within himself, walking through much of the action and then suddenly and decisively exploding into life, Messi would still be able to play in the next World Cup, at the age of 42 turning 43. Spain's unquestionable superiority made 2030 look a long way in the future, and as he gazed at the massed ranks of Argentina supporters, Messi could certainly have been thinking that this was the last time.

But there could have been a third emotion – one of relief. Because it was ten years ago, in that very stadium, that Messi announced his retirement from international football. Argentina had just lost three finals in three years – the 2014 World Cup followed by two versions of the Copa America. Messi declared himself jinxed. It would never work out for him, and so he might as well stop playing for his country.

Almost immediately he had a rethink, and both he and football have reaped the benefits. Because if early and mid-period Messi belonged to Barcelona, then the latter years in the career of the little man have been all about Argentina. After going without a senior title for 28 years, Lionel Scaloni's team enjoyed a five-year period where they won absolutely everything – two editions of the Copa America, the Finalissima against Italy in 2022, one World Cup and all the way through to the final of the next one. If Messi really had jumped ship in 2016 then the World Cup question – what has he done for Argentina? – would always be used as a stick to beat him. Instead, in addition to all of his mighty achievements in the Champions League, Lionel Messi has also become a genuine World Cup legend, with some extraordinary highs to add to the many frustrations.

And if Messi appears to have ended his World Cup career with the disappointment of a veteran, he began it with a large dose of teenage frustration.

He turned 19 during the course of Germany 2006, when Jose Pekerman's Argentina side had a fair claim to be considered the best team in the tournament. Messi had won the Under-20 World Cup the year before, and was being gradually introduced to the national team – perhaps too gradually. The second game was a magnificent 6-0 thrashing of Serbia & Montenegro. Messi made his World Cup debut as a late substitute, and left his mark on the scoresheet. He started the next game against the Netherlands, but made little impression in a goalless draw and was back on the bench for the knockout matches. And there he stayed for the duration of the fateful quarter-final against Germany, where Argentina lost in a penalty shootout. Even 20 years later Pekerman's choice of substitutions remains controversial. Argentina were ahead in the game, and would surely have had a better chance of protecting their lead had Messi been introduced. His intricate skills would at least have brought some free-kicks, slowed down the rhythm of the game and made it harder

Bowing out...this year's final was surely Messi's last World Cup match

MESSI
10

Lionel Messi has become a genuine World Cup legend, with some extraordinary highs to add to the many frustrations

for Germany to grab an equaliser, which they eventually did in the 80th minute.

Four years later in South Africa, there was no chance of Messi being left on the bench. By now he was a global superstar, and had won some international silverware – or rather goldware – at the Beijing Olympics in 2008. He even captained the side in the third group game, when Javier Mascherano was rested.

But his place in the pecking order was not entirely secure. The team was coached by Diego Maradona, who had taken over with Argentina in crisis and steered them over the line to qualification. Come the competition, Maradona was unable to restrain himself. He sought to revolutionise football with an ultra-attacking approach, and could not resist the temptation to find a place in the side for Carlos Tevez. It unbalanced the team, leaving Argentina dangerously front-loaded, and Messi seemed to be doing the fetching and carrying for Tevez as Argentina were once again knocked out by Germany in the quarter-final – this time with a 4-0 thrashing.

Going into the 2014 World Cup in Brazil, then, Messi had just a single World Cup goal to his name. He soon added to his tally with two wonderful strikes, a typical exchange of passes and a curler from the edge of the area to light up the Maracana against Bosnia & Herzegovina and one from even further out to break Iranian hearts and resistance in the last minute of the game. Two more followed against Nigeria. But the knockout stage proved hard work, especially after an injury to winger Angel Di Maria. Without him, Argentina's goals dried up, and if the group phase belonged to Messi, the knockouts were all about the grit and determination of Mascherano in midfield. After 1-0 wins over Switzerland and Belgium, Argentina drew 0-0 with the Netherlands and made it through to the final on a shootout. Messi was again short of inspiration on the big day, and made little impression as Germany took the trophy with a 1-0 win after extra-time.

2006 World Cup...Messi scored his first World Cup goal v Serbia & Montenegro

Although he quickly went back on his decision to retire from the international game, things got worse before they got better. The 2018 World Cup was the most shambolic of the tournaments Messi played for Argentina, with coach Jorge Sampaoli proving an out-of-control disaster. Messi scored a superb right-footed goal against Nigeria to avoid group phase elimination, but Argentina soon fell to France in the last 16.

And so, going into Qatar 2022, Messi was 35 years of age and had never scored a goal in the knockout phase of a World Cup. But all that was about to change dramatically. In fact, things had already changed. Once Lionel Scaloni took over as head coach, Argentina began to make sense, with a team constructed around Messi in which his team-mates came across as adoring fan club

2022 World Cup... Messi finally lifted the trophy in Qatar

2010 World Cup...Argentina were managed by Diego Maradona in South Africa

2014 World Cup...Messi won the Golden Ball as Argentina lost to Germany in the final

2018 World Cup...Messi and Argentina were knocked out by eventual winners France

members. They scrapped, ran and defended so that Messi didn't have to. The 2021 Copa America, Argentina's first senior title in 28 years, had lightened the burden on the team, who went into the World Cup buoyed by a long unbeaten run – and straightaway lost to Saudi Arabia.

Every game was a final from then on. In the next match against Mexico, Messi launched Argentina's campaign with a wonderful shot from outside the penalty area – and Argentina were away. The big difference from the last campaign and this one is that in 2026 they had to fight their way through every knockout game, relying heavily on Messi's capacity to read the game, identify the vulnerable space in the opposition defence and take steps to exploit it. The intelligence of his heroics against Egypt and England will live long in the memory.

But after the humbling they took at the hands of Spain, it is clear that Qatar was peak-level Messi, the moment when the little genius and his team were firing together on all cylinders. In 2022, Argentina dominated most of the time in all of their knockout matches. Messi shone with his goals and with his assists – a sublime pass to Nahuel Molina that took out the entire Dutch defence, a run down the right wing against Josko Gvardiol of Croatia that is almost the definition of football speed, teasing the defender with changes of rhythm and direction. And that one, of his three World Cup finals, was the one where he was able to make the difference, scoring early from the penalty spot and adding another in extra-time. Five of his seven goals in Qatar came in the knockout rounds, and then he scored six more in the 2026 group phase before finding the net against both Cape Verde and Egypt. This gave him a new record – over the 2022 and 2026 campaigns he scored in nine consecutive World Cup matches. Indeed, had he not missed a penalty against Poland in 2022 (one of four he's missed in total) that record would stand at a probably unbeatable 12.

It seems unlikely that there will be any more. In the race between the athlete and time there is only ever one winner, and though Messi has given Father Time a good run for his money, that also applies to him. But across 34 matches in six World Cups, Messi has hit some of the highest peaks in the history of the competition, and endured plenty of low points along the way. Sunday, July 19 2026 was one of those low points. But long after the tears have dried, the memory of the highs will give a warm glow to fans all over the planet.

Tim Vickery

MESSI'S WORLD CUP RECORDS

34 World Cup matches played in, more than any other player, including a record 23 victories

6 World Cup tournaments played in, a record jointly held with long-time adversary Cristiano Ronaldo

21 World Cup goals – only Kylian Mbappe has scored more

14 Number of those goals that have come in the World Cup group stage – another record

3 Appearances in the World Cup final match, equalling the record held by Brazil's legendary right-back Cafu

2 Golden Balls – the only player to win the tournament's best player award more than once

9 Consecutive World Cup matches scored in, as well as netting in 16 matches overall – also a record

12 World Cup assists, ten of which have come in the knockout stages – both of which are records

26 World Cup games started as Argentina captain

18 Youngest player to score for Argentina at a World Cup

39 Oldest player to score for Argentina at a World Cup

16 World Cup goals scored after turning 30 years old

PLAYERS OF THE TOURNAMENT

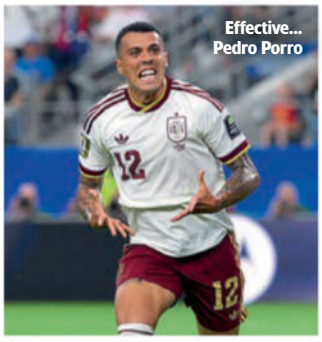
Golden Glove ...Unai Simon

GOALKEEPER

UNAI SIMON
(Spain)
Only had to make ten saves in the entire tournament, but won the Golden Glove after keeping seven clean sheets and going a record 650 minutes without conceding. Had the best save percentage (91.7%) of any goalie and led from the back with his proactive positioning as a sweeper-keeper.

Honourable mentions:
Eloy Room (Curacao) – Equalled the World Cup record for most saves in a single match (15); **Vozinha** (Cape Verde) – Rose to prominence after his clean sheet v Spain; **Orjan Nyland** (Norway) – Produced an outstanding display against Brazil, including one of the saves of the tournament; **Gregor Kobel** (Switzerland) – Shone in the group stage v Canada, was the penalty-shootout hero v Colombia and produced a magnificent display against Argentina in the last eight.

RIGHT-BACK


Effective... Pedro Porro

PEDRO PORRO
(Spain)
Porro began Spain's opening match on the bench but quickly displaced Marcos Llorente and never looked back, delivering a series of outstanding all-round performances. He also scored his first and second international goals, including the crucial second against France in the semi-final.

Honourable mentions:
Achraf Hakimi (Morocco) – The marauding Moroccan registered two assists and a goal in six appearances; **Daniel Munoz** (Colombia) – Scored twice and was a constant attacking threat with his relentless forward runs.

CENTRE-BACKS

PAU CUBARSI
(Spain)
The only player aged under 20 to play every minute for his country, the Young Player of the Tournament was virtually faultless throughout *La Roja's* World Cup-winning campaign. Mature beyond his years, Cubarsi finished with an astounding 96% passing accuracy.

AYMERIC LAPORTE
(Spain)
The experienced defender was formidable alongside Cubarsi. His reading of the game and distribution were of the highest quality, while he also became the first player to defeat his country of birth in a World Cup semi-final.

Honourable mentions:
Cristian Romero (Argentina) – The always-combative defender combined passion with composure, and was a big goal threat too. His audacious penalty-area *croqueta* past Anthony Gordon and Jude Bellingham in the semi-final epitomised his confidence. His centre-back partner **Lisandro Martinez** was equally imperious; **Dayot Upamecano** (France) – Alongside **William Saliba**, formed one of the tournament's strongest central defensive partnerships; **Roberto Pico Lopes** (Cape Verde) – Marshalled the World Cup debutants' defence masterfully.

Masterful in midfield...Rodri

LEFT-BACK

MARC CUCURELLA
(Spain)
Grabbed headlines at the start of the tournament by signing for Real Madrid, then validated his fee by providing two assists in Spain's run to glory. Defensively dependable throughout, he also offered constant width and energy going forward.

Honourable mentions:
Nuno Mendes (Portugal) – Sorely missed after suffering an injury against Spain following a string of exceptional displays; **Djed Spence** (England) – Impressed with his tenacity and recovery pace. Made 19 tackles – the most of any England player at a World Cup since 2002.

MIDFIELDERS

RODRI
(Spain)
Any concerns over Rodri's fitness or form quickly disappeared as he produced performances reminiscent of his Ballon d'Or-winning best. No player completed more passes during the tournament than the Golden Ball winner's tally of 790.

MICHAEL OLISE
(France)
Carried his club form into the tournament, finishing with seven assists – three more than anyone else. His clever link-up play with *Les Bleus'* forwards - especially Kylian Mbappe – was absolutely electric. Only Argentina's Lionel Messi created more chances.

JUDE BELLINGHAM
(England)
Delivered repeatedly in the biggest moments, including knockout-round braces v Mexico and Norway. Whether operating as a number ten or number eight, he was England's standout performer, finishing with seven goals and one assist.

Clutch...Jude Bellingham

Honourable mentions:
Leandro Paredes (Argentina) – The battling midfielder imposed himself on every opponent, while team-mate **Enzo Fernandez** also impressed, particularly with his superb goal against England; **Ayyoub Bouaddi** (Morocco) – The 18-year-old announced himself on the world stage with a series of top midfield displays; **Granit Xhaka** (Switzerland) – Everything flowed through the Swiss captain, while **Johan Manzambi** also enjoyed an excellent debut tournament, recording five goal involvements in four matches; **Dani Olmo** (Spain) – Excelled between the lines, combining intelligent movement with creativity and attacking thrust; **Martin Odegaard** (Norway) – Reminded everyone of his world-class quality. The Norway captain dictated play, drove attacks and was instrumental in both the build-up and in the final third.

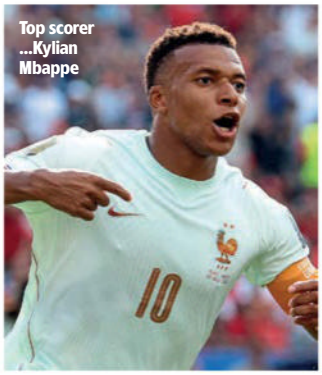
FORWARDS

LIONEL MESSI
(Argentina)
Playing as part of a front two but with complete freedom to roam, Messi created more chances and completed more dribbles than any other player at the tournament. His inspirational second-half display against England in the semi-final – including two special assists – dragged Argentina into the final.

ERLING HAALAND
(Norway)
At his first major international tournament, Haaland scored seven goals in just five matches as Norway stormed their way to the quarter-finals. His dominant individual battle with Brazil centre-back Gabriel in the round of 16 would have been particularly satisfying.

KYLIAN MBAPPE
(France)
Became the first player to be involved in more than 100 goals for France. Led the line brilliantly for *Les Bleus*, stretching defences with his pace, creating goals out of nothing and punishing opposition defences whenever space appeared. Golden Boot winner with ten goals and now the World Cup's all-time top scorer with 22 – one ahead of Messi.

Honourable mentions:
Lamine Yamal (Spain) – Enjoyed a very impressive first World Cup, consistently providing Spain with a dangerous outlet down the right. Team-mate **Mikel Oyarzabal** also contributed five goals and one assist while excelling with his intelligent link-up play; **Leandro Trossard** (Belgium) – When he bowed out, only Messi had created more chances than Trossard, who finished with two goals and two assists; **Ismaila Sarr** (Senegal) – Ended the tournament with four goals, equalling the record for the most scored by an African player at a single World Cup finals; **Julian Quinones** (Mexico) – After scoring the hosts' opening goal of the tournament, he added three more goals and an assist; **Harry Kane** (England) – Became England's all-time leading World Cup goalscorer, finishing with six goals, including a match-winning brace against DR Congo; **Ousmane Dembele** (France) – Another key figure in France's formidable attack, contributing six goals and two assists.


Top scorer ...Kylian Mbappe

WORLD SOCCER'S TEAM OF THE TOURNAMENT

TEAM BY TEAM *group-stage exit*

Disappointing World Cup...South Korea's Son Heung-min

SOUTH KOREA

Having opened the group stage with one of the most encouraging performances, coming back from 1-0 down to defeat the Czech Republic, South Korea ended it in the most disappointing fashion. That win included a nicely taken goal from Hwang In-beom, which in its own way was one of the standout goals of the group stage. The problem was the two goals in that game were the only ones they scored, and a shock defeat to South Africa meant they didn't have enough to qualify among the top eight third-placed teams.

CZECH REPUBLIC

The Czechs might have looked at their Group A opponents and fancied themselves to get something from each game. For a team that qualified via the UEFA play-offs, they certainly could have had a tougher group. As it turned out, they left the tournament with just one point, taken from a draw with South Africa. They gave up a one-goal lead in that game and also against South Korea in their opener to lose 2-1, and ended their tournament by providing co-hosts Mexico with a feel-good 3-0 win in the Azteca.

Bowing out...Tomas Soucek picked up a bad ankle injury

Ill-disciplined... Qatar had two men sent off v Canada

QATAR

Having appeared at their first-ever World Cup finals in 2022 as hosts, Qatar followed that up by successfully navigating Asian qualification for the first time to make it back-to-back appearances. Once in North America they did what they couldn't do in 2022, picking up their first World Cup point thanks to a dramatic late goal against Switzerland, but there were no more positives. An ill-disciplined 6-0 defeat to Canada and a 3-1 loss to Bosnia & Herzegovina meant they exited having conceded more goals than they did in 2022.

HAITI

Participating in their first World Cup finals since 1974, Haiti's 52-year absence was, along with DR Congo's, the longest of any non-debutant at this tournament. Haiti-based fans were subject to a US travel ban, but those with Haitian roots based in the US attended in numbers. They had something to celebrate when Wilson Isidor blasted home one of the goals of the tournament to give them the lead against Morocco. Though they eventually lost 4-2, and also suffered defeats to Brazil and Scotland, it was a joyful moment for Haitians anywhere and the team can be proud of their showing.

Goal of the tournament contender... Wilson Isidor

Early exit...Scotland players after the Brazil defeat

SCOTLAND

Steve Clarke resigned as Scotland failed to go past the group stage, which gives some indication of how Scotland viewed their performance. Despite qualification itself being an achievement, doing so for the first time since France '98, they played within themselves at times once there. You don't want to leave yourself needing a result against Brazil to stay in a World Cup, but that's the situation Scotland found themselves in, and they lost 3-0 after some self-inflicted defensive mistakes. Supporters will still take home good memories of their time in Boston – and Boston will remember them fondly, too.

TURKEY

It wasn't until the last group-stage game, against an already-qualified United States, that Turkey really showed what they could do at the tournament. By that time, though, their elimination was already confirmed, which may explain the freedom with which they played in that 3-2 win. They would have expected to defeat Australia and Paraguay, too, but suffered shock losses to both when even a draw in one of those games would have been enough to see them reach the knockout stages. The perennial European Championship dark horses fell at the first World Cup hurdle.

Too little, too late ...Turkey celebrate scoring v USA

Glorious moment... Livano Comenencia after scoring against Germany

CURACAO

There was a glorious moment for the debutants when Livano Comenencia equalised against Germany to score his country's first World Cup goal in their first World Cup game. They went on to lose 7-1, but another achievement was soon to follow as they earned a 0-0 draw against an Ecuador team that went on to defeat Germany in their next game. Eloy Room of Miami FC put in one of the memorable World Cup performances – with a record 15 saves – to earn his team a World Cup point against the odds.

TUNISIA

While the rest of the African contingent qualified for the knockout stages, Tunisia exited early after a wholly uninspiring showing. The Eagles of Carthage conceded nine goals in their opening two games, five against Sweden – which saw head coach Sabri Lamouchi sensationally sacked and replaced by fellow Frenchman Herve Renard – and four against Japan, becoming one of the first nations to have their group-stage exit confirmed. Another three conceded in the final game against the Netherlands – with a third-minute own goal by captain Ellyes Skhiri summing up their woes and opening the floodgates – left them with the joint-worst defensive record in the group stage along with Iraq.

Sacked... Sabri Lamouchi

TEAM BY TEAM *group-stage exit*

Defiant...Iran were up against it in this tournament

IRAN

Iran faced numerous obstacles as they geared up for this tournament, including seeing their training base moved at the last minute and various travel restrictions when entering and leaving the United States. Despite that, they were within a whisker of knockout-round qualification, only being denied on the final day of the group stages – and that after having a dramatic last-gasp winner against Egypt ruled out for the most narrowest of offside calls. If they were able to prepare and recover in the same way every other team at the tournament did, the fine margins that went against them might have gone in their favour. A resilient showing on and off the pitch.

NEW ZEALAND

Motherwell winger Elijah Just scored twice in the opening game against Iran and once in the final group match against Belgium to provide a positive NZ narrative, but it wasn't enough to get the All Whites a first World Cup win. Iran matched Just's double, and defeats to Egypt (3-1) and Belgium (5-1), despite a half-time lead against the former, meant no progress. Off the pitch, defender Tim Payne ended the finals with millions of social media followers after a viral campaign deemed him the least-known player at the tournament and campaigned to up his following.

Breakout star ...Elijah Just

Press conference rant...Marcelo Bielsa

URUGUAY

There was no one more disappointed in Uruguay's unexpected group-stage exit than manager Marcelo Bielsa. "What do I leave behind for Uruguayan soccer?" he asked in his press conference after a 1-0 defeat to European champions Spain. "Nothing," he answered. Losing to one of the World Cup favourites might have been expected, but draws against Cape Verde (2-2) and Saudi Arabia (1-1) – where the South American nation fell behind in both matches – weren't. That's what cost the *Celeste* a place in the knockout rounds. It also cost Bielsa his job, and, according to himself, any legacy in Uruguayan football.

SAUDI ARABIA

A draw with Uruguay meant the 2034 hosts always had a chance of reaching the knockout rounds for the second time in their history, having done so last time the finals were held in the United States in 1994. Regardless of what happened against Spain (a 4-0 defeat), the match-up with Cape Verde was always going to be key, but they were second best in the 0-0 draw that ensued and the African side progressed at their expense. A disappointing end having set themselves up to go further.

Dejected...Saudi players after the goalless draw with Cape Verde

IRAQ

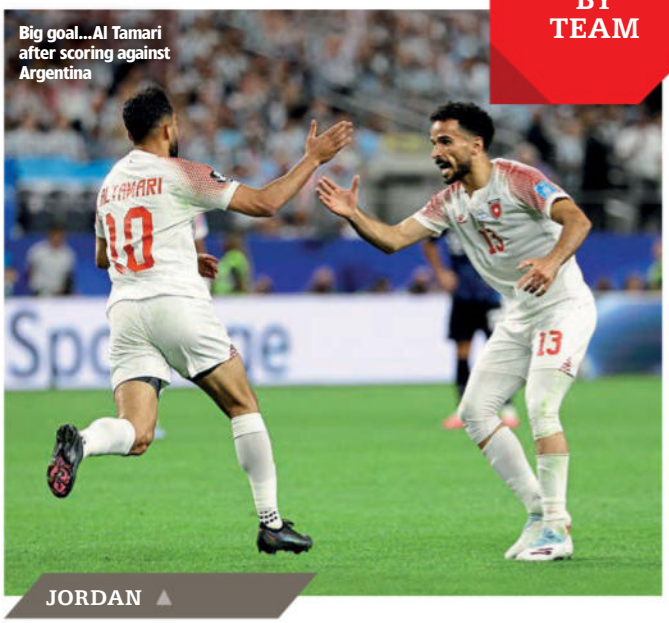
Statistically the worst team at the tournament, but Iraq passed the eye test and were not helped by being drawn in perhaps the toughest group against two of the best teams from their respective continents in France and Senegal, and a Norway team featuring Erling Haaland. No surprise, then, that they had the worst goal difference of the group stage, exacerbated by an early red card that gave Senegal a chance to improve their own goal difference needed to ensure qualification in third place. Iraq did at least manage a second World Cup goal thanks to Aymen Hussein's outstanding header against Norway.

Powerful centre-forward...Aymen Hussein celebrates his goal v Norway

UZBEKISTAN

This was another example of a World Cup debutant whose tournament experience alone should set them up well for future endeavours. Though there was a 5-0 defeat at the hands of Portugal, they held their own for large periods in games against Colombia and DR Congo, even going ahead against the latter. The issues came when they had to shore things up, shown most starkly in that heavy defeat. Had they been a bit more savvy, they may well have gone home with at least a point from their other games.

Uzbek goal threat... Abbosbek Fayzullaev scored v Colombia


Big goal...Al Tamari after scoring against Argentina

JORDAN

Despite losing all three of their group-stage matches, Jordan can take heart from the fact that they found the net in every game on their World Cup finals debut, including one against defending champions Argentina scored by talisman Mousa Al Tamari. They performed admirably against the odds despite having a few players who would have made them stronger missing through injury, including would-be starter in attack, Yazan Al Naimat. A first World Cup to build upon for the Arab nation.

Goalless...Panama didn't score at these finals

PANAMA

Panama looked threatening at times in each of their group-stage matches, but in the end lost all three. A late goal conceded in their opening clash against Ghana was a huge blow from which the Central Americans never recovered. Though they looked competent against Croatia and England, it wasn't enough, and promising moments in attack never turned into anything substantial. Panama exited not only without registering a point, but also as the only team at the tournament that failed to score a single goal.

TEAM BY TEAM *last-32 exit*

Bowing out ...South Africa react to their exit

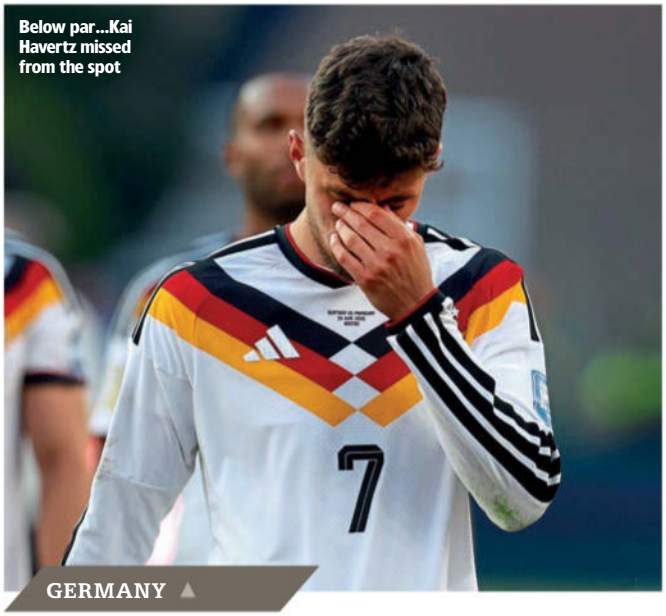
SOUTH AFRICA

Winger Thapelo Maseko scored South Africa's only goal in open play during the tournament to give them a shock 1-0 win against South Korea. It saw them progress as runners-up in Group A after they also drew with the Czech Republic. Having already lost to one co-host, Mexico, in the group stage after two red cards, they eventually fell to another, Canada, in the round of 32, but only narrowly and from a goal in added time. A promising showing, which owes huge credit to their 74-year-old coach Hugo Broos.

JAPAN

Having gone through the group stage unbeaten, with draws against the Netherlands and Sweden and a convincing 4-0 win against Tunisia, Japan fancied themselves against an inconsistent Brazil in the first knockout round. They did so even more when they took the lead through Kaishu Sano, but a Casemiro equaliser and an agonising 95th-minute winner from Gabriel Martinelli sent them home. There's promise for a nation that could go far in World Cups, but they couldn't reach the level required when it mattered at this one.

Agonising... a Japan fan after the loss to Brazil



Below par...Kai Havertz missed from the spot

GERMANY

Expectations were relatively low for Germany going into this tournament, but even then, a last-32 exit was still considered below par. A crushing 7-1 victory against minnows Curacao in the opener was followed up with a dramatic late win against Ivory Coast, introducing a feel-good factor to the camp. They topped their group despite a 2-1 defeat to Ecuador, but that loss, rather than the earlier victories, was the indication of things to come, as they exited on penalties to Paraguay. It cost coach Julian Nagelsmann his job, with Jurgen Klopp expected to replace him.

NETHERLANDS

Despite finishing as joint-highest goalscorers in the group stage along with Germany and France, Ronald Koeman's side fell at the first hurdle in the knockout rounds. Facing a team as strong as Morocco so early on was a tough draw, but the defensive approach to the game led to criticism from Dutch supporters and the media. It was especially anticlimactic after such a lauded attacking showing in the group stage in which Brian Brobbey, Cody Gakpo and Crysencio Summerville all impressed. Koeman announced his resignation shortly after.

Shootout heartbreak...Dutch players react to the loss

Sweden striker... Viktor Gyokeres

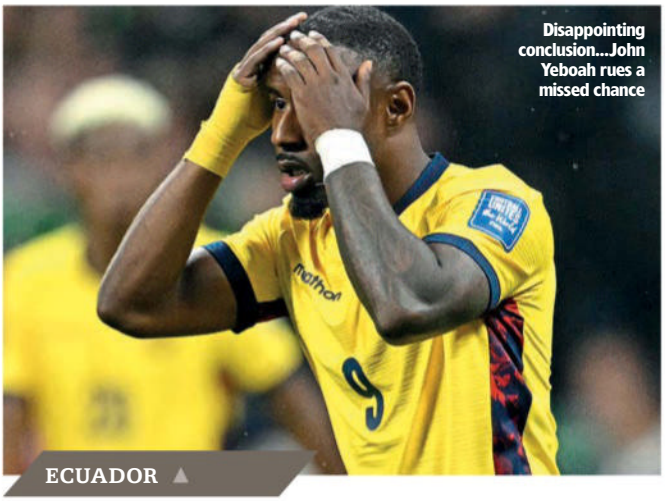
SWEDEN

Qualified via the UEFA Nations League route to the play-offs after a dismal campaign in World Cup qualifying itself. The Swedes kicked off the group stage with a convincing 5-1 win against Tunisia, but fell back down to earth after losing to the Netherlands by the same scoreline. A 1-1 draw with Japan was enough to make the knockouts from third place, but once there they couldn't handle France and were lucky to only concede three while barely threatening in attack themselves.

IVORY COAST

It was a momentous World Cup for Ivory Coast as they managed to progress past the group stage for the first time, in what was their fourth finals appearance. They had the youngest squad at the tournament, with 20-year-old midfielder Christ Inao Oulai and 19-year-old winger Yan Diomande particularly catching the eye. They made a good go of it against Norway in the last 32, much better than Brazil would fare against the same opponents in the last 16, but lost out to a late Erling Haaland goal.

Breakout star... Yan Diomande


Disappointing conclusion...John Yeboah rues a missed chance

ECUADOR

A group stage that was heading for disaster was rescued in the most memorable fashion with a victory against Germany in New Jersey. New York City's considerable Ecuadorian contingent celebrated in the streets as well as the stands as the three points erased memories of earlier poor results – a 1-0 defeat to Ivory Coast and a goalless draw with Curacao. They couldn't carry this momentum into the knockout rounds, however, and lost to Mexico at the Estadio Azteca without ever looking like they could trouble the hosts in their own backyard. After a South American qualifying campaign that suggested they could go deep, it was a disappointing conclusion.

DR CONGO

Joyous scenes followed the Democratic Republic of Congo's 3-1 win against Uzbekistan that ensured their path through from the group stage as the best of the third-placed teams. Superfan Lumumba Vea managed to make it over for a game in Mexico after quarantining due to the Ebola outbreak back home, though wasn't allowed to enter the United States for the memorable win nor the meeting with England that followed. Once facing England, the Leopards led for much of the game, but two late Harry Kane goals ended a creditable World Cup showing.

Heroic performance... DR Congo keeper Lionel Mpasi shone v England

TEAM BY TEAM *last-32 exit*

Heartbroken... Senegal blew a two-goal lead

SENEGAL

Despite approaching the finals as one of the most likely African teams to go far in this World Cup, a poor run of pre-tournament friendlies and an underwhelming group stage – albeit against strong opposition – quickly shifted expectations. They won their last group game 5-0 against ten-man Iraq to qualify in third place, and then at 2-0 up against Belgium in the last 32, the strong version of Senegal looked back. That was until they went on to concede twice in the last five minutes before conceding another in extra-time to lose 3-2.

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

This tournament marked the first progress to the World Cup knockout rounds for Bosnia & Herzegovina since their independence in 1993 following the breakup of Yugoslavia. Sergej Barbarez's side spoiled the party for one co-host in the opening game, drawing 1-1 with Canada in Toronto, and this, plus a 3-1 win against Qatar, paved the way for a last-32 tie with another host nation, the United States. But they caught Mauricio Pochettino's side on a good day, losing 2-0. A promising group of young players, led by Kerim Alajbegovic and Esmir Bajraktarevic, will expect to return to this stage, although not with the country's record goalscorer Edin Dzeko.

Last World Cup ...Edin Dzeko

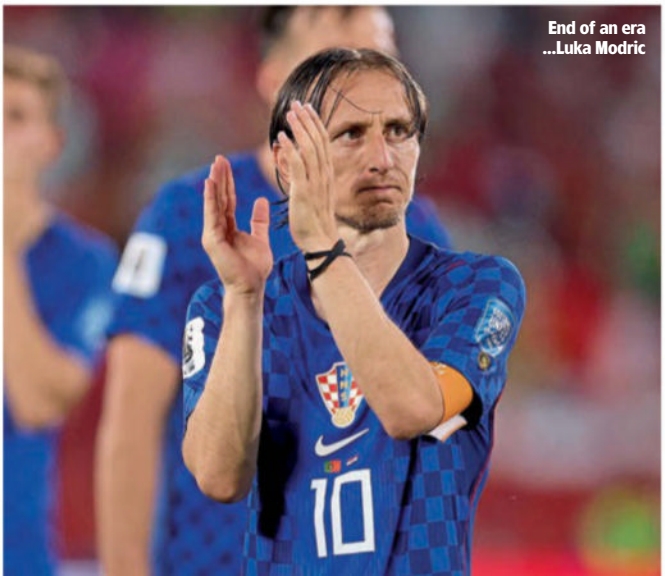
Fading veteran... David Alaba turned 34 during the finals

AUSTRIA

How you might imagine an Austrian team managed by Ralf Rangnick to be was exactly what we got from Austria in qualifying for their first World Cup since 1998. Their intense pressing approach was still evident in the finals, if not quite as prominent, and saw them progress from their group as runners-up behind Argentina after a dramatic 3-3 draw with Algeria in which they needed a 96th-minute goal from Sasa Kalajdzic. Spain were too much for them in the knockouts, but you now get the feeling that Austria will be World Cup regulars – as long as the fading veterans can be replaced by up-and-coming young talent.

CROATIA

The 40-year-old legend of Croatian football, Luka Modric, played what looks set to be his final World Cup game in a 2-1 defeat to Portugal. Whether he stays on for Euro 2028 or not, this is the end of an era as their coach Zlatko Dalic departed after nine years in the role. Having navigated a potentially tricky group, with victories over Ghana and Panama negating a loss to England, they also took the lead against Portugal before eventually losing out to a 94th-minute Goncalo Ramos header. They will forever lament the last-gasp VAR call that ruled out Josko Gvardiol's equaliser in the 13th minute of stoppage time.



End of an era ...Luka Modric

Skied...Harry Souttar sends his penalty over the crossbar

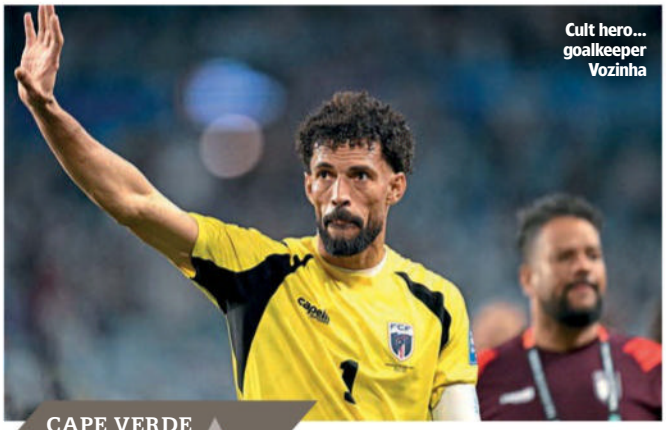
AUSTRALIA

The Socceroos' World Cup ended up being defined by a penalty-shootout defeat to Egypt, in which decisions to send two centre-backs up to take penalties and replace the excellent Patrick Beach with penalty-specialist Mat Ryan in goal backfired. There was a memorable win against Turkey to open the tournament and aid progress to the knockouts, but misses from the spot from Harry Souttar and 18-year-old Lucas Herrington meant they went out despite an admirable draw against Egypt after extra-time.

ALGERIA

A comeback win against fellow Arab nation Jordan, along with that dramatic 3-3 draw with Austria in the final group game – which saw Fennecs captain Riyad Mahrez sign off from the international stage with a brace – was enough to see Vladimir Petkovic's side through to the knockout rounds as one of the best third-placed sides. It was to be their only victory, though, as they succumbed to the Swiss in the round of 32. There was pride in their presence at a World Cup for the first time since 2014 – and only their fifth global finals overall – but also disappointment in their displays, especially their lacklustre performance against Switzerland.

Disappointing exit ...Algeria failed to test Switzerland


Cult hero... goalkeeper Vozinha

CAPE VERDE

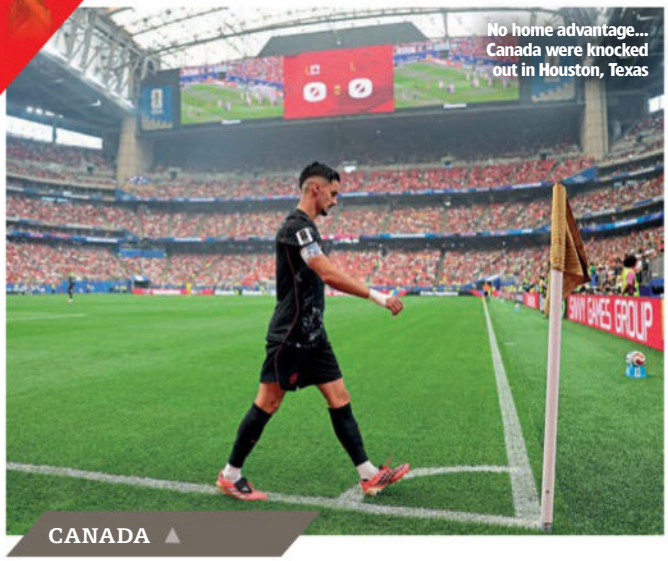
The African island nation was one of the success stories of this tournament. They had topped their qualifying group in CAF, losing only once to qualify directly, so their presence was no fluke and not necessarily due to the expansion to 48 teams. They proved this at the finals, drawing all of their group matches, including against Uruguay and Spain, and gave Argentina the fright of their lives in a last-32 matchup that was one of the games of the tournament. Iconic 40-year-old goalkeeper Vozinha will go down in World Cup folklore.

GHANA

A late winner from 20-year-old midfielder Caleb Yirenkyi against Panama, followed by a 0-0 draw with England, set the tone for what was initially a fairly positive World Cup for Ghana. That didn't last too long, though. Fans felt let down by the performance in their last-32 defeat to Colombia, in which they registered no shots on target and didn't look like troubling the South Americans despite the narrow 1-0 scoreline. Coach Carlos Queiroz had a nice moment with the fans after the Panama win, but left his post following the Colombia defeat.

Flat out...Ghana's Derrick Luckassen

TEAM BY TEAM *last-16 exit*



No home advantage... Canada were knocked out in Houston, Texas

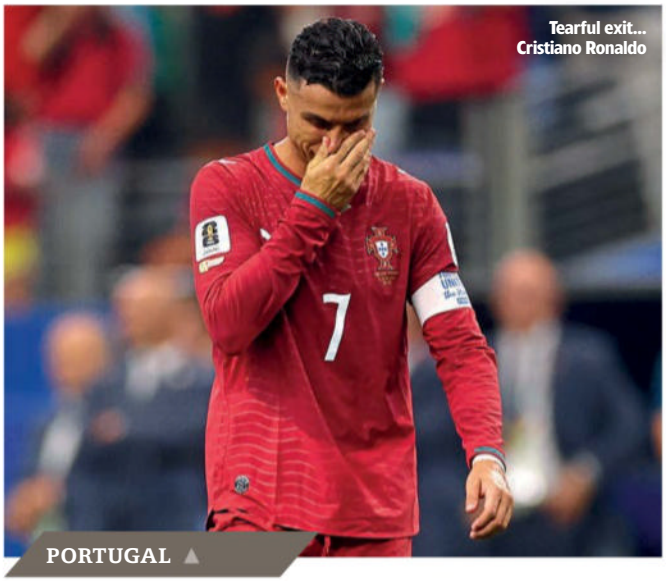
CANADA

The co-hosts picked up their first-ever World Cup win in a 6-0 dismantling of Qatar in the group stage, and then got their second in a last-32 victory against South Africa as a late goal from Stephen Eustaquio sparked nationwide celebrations. But Jesse Marsch's side failed to top their group, which cost them their home advantage and sent them to California and Texas rather than Vancouver. Morocco, though, may have had too much for them in the last 16 anyway, no matter where the game was played.

PARAGUAY

Finished third in their group thanks to a win against Turkey and a draw with Australia. Despite handing hosts USA a morale-boosting 4-1 win in the opener, their defence became key, and their win against Germany on penalties in the last 32 was an impressive upset. Though accused of roughhouse tactics in a narrow loss to France in the last 16, any other approach and the result might not have been so narrow. Towering goalkeeper Orlando Gill was named man of the match and right wing-back Juan Jose Caceres also impressed.

Heavy-handed... Paraguay were criticised for their approach



Tearful exit... Cristiano Ronaldo

PORTUGAL

Cristiano Ronaldo's tearful exit overshadowed what was another disappointing World Cup showing from Portugal. Their only convincing win, and Ronaldo's only open-play goals, came in a 5-0 group-stage thrashing of Uzbekistan. They knocked out Croatia in a last-16 tie that could have gone either way, with their opponents left feeling aggrieved by a late VAR offside decision, before losing to Iberian neighbours Spain. Head coach Roberto Martinez departed, too, and will be replaced by Jorge Jesus, giving Portugal a much-needed fresh start ahead of co-hosting in 2030.

UNITED STATES

The controversial suspension of Folarin Balogun's one-match ban for picking up a red card against Bosnia & Herzegovina in the last 32 dominated the build-up to the co-hosts' massive last-16 tie with Belgium. Mauricio Pochettino's side had performed almost perfectly to that point, bar a 3-2 defeat to Turkey in a group-stage dead rubber, but looked like a different team against Belgium, appearing distracted and lacking concentration. Expectations were sky-high after the good early showing, so defeat, especially in such an uncompetitive manner, hit the home supporters hard.

At the centre of controversy... Folarin Balogun

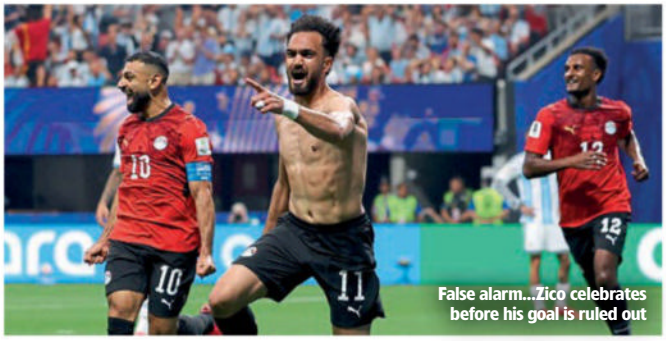
Iconic stadium...Mexico players at the Estado Azteca

MEXICO

The southernmost of the co-hosts were enjoying a textbook tournament throughout the group stage and into the first knockout round. They defeated South Africa, South Korea, Czech Republic and Ecuador all without conceding a single goal, and managed some rotation in the process after early qualification from their group. The Estadio Azteca was a tournament highlight, and provided a tough test for England in the last 16. Mexico fought well in defeat, but will be annoyed not to have made more of their one-man advantage late on.

EGYPT

The World Cup cards dealt us a meeting between two football icons – Mohamed Salah and Lionel Messi – in the last 16, and it didn't disappoint. It produced controversy and quality as an Egypt goal was ruled out for a foul at the other end of the pitch, before Salah, Haissem Hassan and Mostafa Zico combined again to put them 2-0 up anyway. Argentina came back to win, inspired by Messi, leading to a sense from the Egyptians that they had been robbed by VAR. A surprising fact was that the group-stage win against New Zealand was their first-ever at a World Cup, 92 years on from their tournament debut.


False alarm...Zico celebrates before his goal is ruled out

Heartbroken...Brazil players after losing to Norway

BRAZIL

The ease with which the Brazilians qualified from their group, with 3-0 victories against both Scotland and Haiti, gave way to a more difficult knockout experience. A late Gabriel Martinelli goal was needed to see off Japan, before they met their match in the considerable shape of Norway. Carlo Ancelotti's team had plenty of chances of their own in the 2-1 defeat, but couldn't finish them. Norway had Erling Haaland to finish theirs, which proved to be the difference. A blow for a nation known for its attacking flair – and a sorry end to the World Cup career of their record goalscorer Neymar.

COLOMBIA

A difficulty finding the back of the net despite decent performances and ample creativity ended up being Colombia's downfall as they exited on penalties following a 0-0 draw with Switzerland. Aside from three goals against Uzbekistan, Colombia's progress was thanks to 1-0 wins or 0-0 draws. They had chances against Switzerland and were the slightly more enterprising of the two teams but couldn't take them when they arrived. Missing twice from the spot saw their tournament end in disappointment. Other than Argentina, they were arguably South America's most impressive performers.

Shootout heartbreak... Colombia players after exiting on penalties

TEAM BY TEAM *quarter-final exit*

Breakout star... Morocco teenager Ayyoub Bouaddi

MOROCCO

Became the first African nation to reach the quarter-finals in consecutive tournaments, having gone further than any team from their continent in 2022 by making the semis. They needed to beat France to reach that stage this time, but didn't show enough in attack to do so. Got past the Netherlands on penalties in the round of 32 following a last-gasp Issa Diop equaliser in normal time, and then dispatched hosts Canada in the last 16. Their coach from 2022, Walid Regragui, was sacked for a lack of attacking ambition, and, although his successor Mohamed Ouahbi got them playing more on the front foot this time, they reverted to type against the French.

BELGIUM

A rollercoaster ride of a campaign began with unconvincing draws with Egypt (1-1) and Iran (0-0), but a 5-1 win over New Zealand saw the *Diables Rouges* progress. They then looked to be going out in the round of 32, trailing Senegal 2-0 with five minutes to go, until remarkable late goals in normal time plus another in extra-time saw them move on to face the United States. Controversy around the suspension of Folarin Balogun's red-card ban motivated them to easily see off the co-hosts, but injuries to No.1 Thibaut Courtois and captain Youri Tielemans, and an error from substitute keeper Senne Lammens handed Spain a narrow quarter-final win.

Quarter-finalists...Charles De Ketelaere celebrates scoring against Spain

Viking Row...Erling Haaland leads the celebrations after beating Brazil

NORWAY

The Norway fans' "Viking Row" became a tournament feature, and their Erling Haaland-led charge to the quarter-finals marked them out as one of the world's best teams, despite it being their first finals appearance since 1998. Fans will take home good memories from New Jersey, where they defeated Senegal in the group stage and most notably knocked out Brazil in the last 16. On another day, and with a firing Haaland, they could have seen off England too, but went out in a narrow extra-time defeat.

SWITZERLAND

A comfortable win over Algeria and a penalty-shootout victory against Colombia set up one of the tournament's under-the-radar knockout-round runs, which very nearly ran even further. The Swiss looked on top against Argentina after Dan Ndoye's equaliser, but a contentious second yellow card for Breel Embolo for simulation shortly after put them on the back foot. Johan Manzambi made a name for himself with three goals and two assists before picking up an injury, earning a move to the Premier League with Aston Villa.

Premier League bound...Johan Manzambi

The World Cup's all-time top scorer ...Kylian Mbappe

FOURTH PLACE: FRANCE

France had looked like the best team at the tournament up to the semi-final stage, but they simply couldn't handle eventual winners Spain. Everything good about *Les Bleus* to that point dropped off: Michael Olise couldn't create as he did so brilliantly beforehand, and Kylian Mbappe never looked like adding to his eight goals. Head coach Didier Deschamps stepped down having won it in 2018 and finished as runner-up in 2022, while Mbappe's brace in the third-place play-off took him to ten goals, consecutive World Cup Golden Boots and the tournament's all-time goalscoring record.

THIRD PLACE: ENGLAND

After emerging triumphant from a memorable night in Mexico, defeating the co-hosts at the Azteca in tough conditions in the last 16, it looked like England had the wherewithal to win it all. They did just enough to beat a strong Norway, but went ultra-defensive once ahead against Argentina in the semis and couldn't handle the attacks they invited. Thomas Tuchel's defensive changes were fiercely criticised, and an entertaining, attack-minded third-place game, won 6-4 against France with a hat-trick by Arsenal star Bukayo Saka – who didn't play a single minute of the semi-final – only led to more thoughts of what might have been.

Third place ...Bukayo Saka scored a treble in England's final game

Silver medallist... Messi ran out of magic in the final

RUNNERS-UP: ARGENTINA

Failed to register a single shot in 90 minutes of the final, but did manage to put late pressure on Spain, despite Enzo Fernandez's sending off, after going a goal down in extra-time. Couldn't do in the final what they did against England in the semi, and could easily have gone down to nine men in an ill-disciplined showing. It was the only game Lionel Messi played at the tournament in which he didn't score or assist, following a typically impressive overall showing at what was likely his last World Cup.

WINNERS: SPAIN

La Roja's convincing 2-0 victory against France in the semi-finals made Luis de la Fuente's side's clear favourites for the final. In it, they dominated Argentina, and Ferran Torres eventually scored in extra-time to make this count on the scoreboard. A defence that only conceded one goal all tournament then held firm in the tense final moments. Every Spain win was a triumph of their team unit, in and out of possession, and it was apt that one of their lynchpins, Rodri, was named the tournament's best player.

Player of the tournament...Spain skipper Rodri holds the World Cup aloft

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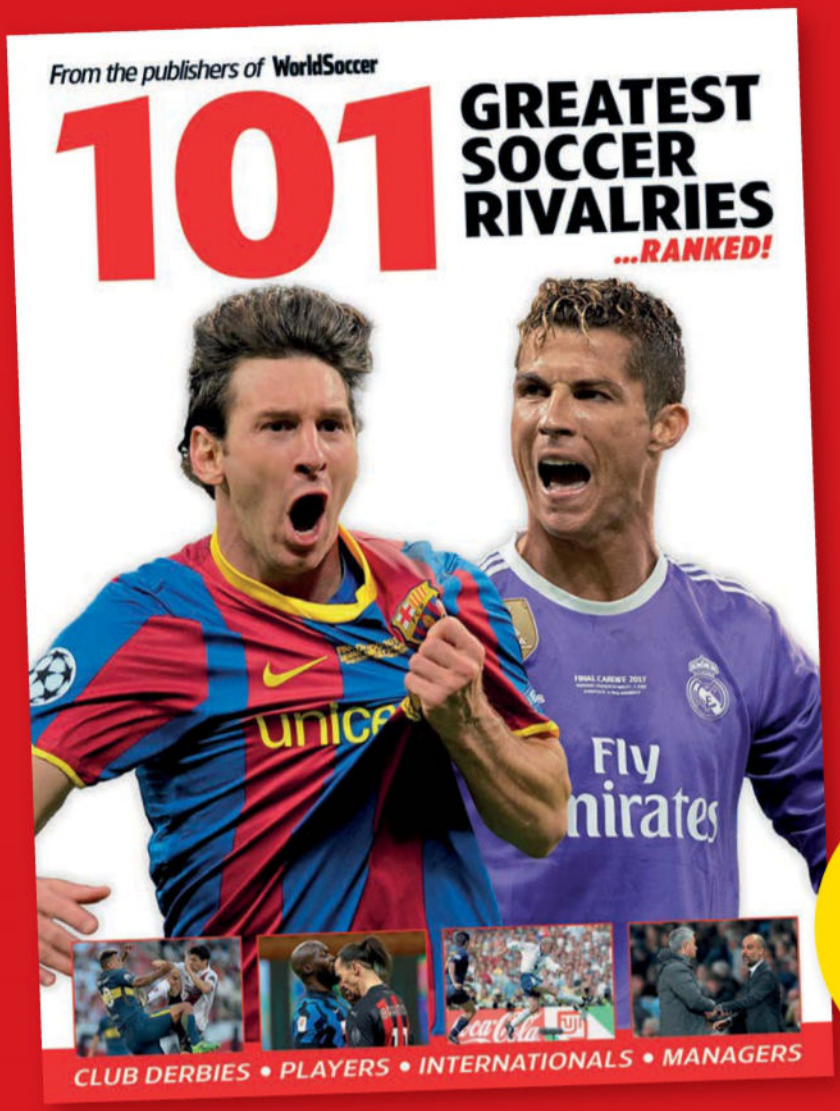

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GROUP A

THURSDAY, JUNE 11, 8PM

MEXICO (1) 2
(Quinones 9, Jimenez 67)

SOUTH AFRICA (0) 0

Estadio Azteca, Mexico City
Att: 80,824 Ref: Wilton Sampaio (Bra)

MEXICO Rangel – Reyes, Montes, Vasquez, Gallardo; Lira (Alvarez 76); Alvarado, Gutierrez (L. Chavez 66), Fidalgo (Mora 66), Quinones (Vega 79); Jimenez (Gonzalez 76)
■ Gutierrez ■ Montes
SOUTH AFRICA Williams – Mudau, Sibisi, Okon, Mbokazi, Modiba (Makgopa 77); Mokoena, Sithole, Adams (Zwane 61); Rayners (Appollis 77), Foster (Mbatha 56)
■ Mokoena, Sibisi ■ Sithole, Zwane

GOALS

1-0 Erik Lira steals possession off Sphephelo Sithole on the edge of his own D, and pokes it to Julian Quinones who cuts in and smashes it between the legs of keeper Ronwen Williams.
2-0 A swift Mexican move culminates in Raul Jimenez meeting Roberto Alvarado's in-swinging left-footed cross with a clinical header.

Dismissed... Themba Zwane was one of three players sent off

SOUTH AFRICA SEE RED IN OPENER

Amid an electric atmosphere at the Estadio Azteca, co-hosts Mexico kicked off the World Cup in style with a comfortable victory over a sorry-looking South Africa. Mexico's Julian Quinones, with the confidence of a man who'd scored 33 goals in 31 Saudi Pro League games for Al Qadsiah, opened the scoring and then hit the post before half-time. Having been denied by Ronwen Williams at the start and end of the first half, Raul Jimenez scored an emotional goal to ensure the scoreline reflected the dominance of *El Tri*, which was accentuated when Sphephelo "Yaya" Sithole was sent off for a professional foul on Brian Gutierrez. Two more dismissals late on made it the most red cards brandished at a World Cup match since the four shown during Portugal v Netherlands, AKA the "Battle of Nuremberg," in 2006.

Mexico		South Africa
60.5%	Possession	39.5%
16(4)	Goal attempts (■ on target)	3(2)
3	Corners	1
12	Fouls	11

FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 3AM

SOUTH KOREA (0) 2
(Hwang In-beom 67, Oh Hyeon-gyu 80)

CZECH REPUBLIC (0) 1
(Krejci 59)

Estadio Guadalajara
Att: 44,985 Ref: Amin Omar (Egy)

SOUTH KOREA Kim Seung-gyu – Lee Han-beom, Kim Min-jae, Lee Gi-hyuk; Seol Young-woo, Hwang In-beom (Kim Jin-gyu 84), Paik Seung-ho (Park Jin-seob 84), Lee Tae-seok (Eom Ji-sung 69); Lee Kang-in, Lee Jae-sung (Hwang Hee-chan 62); Son Heung-min (Oh Hyeon-gyu 69)
■ Lee Gi-hyuk
CZECH REPUBLIC Kovar – Chaloupek, Hranac, Krejci; Coufal, Soucek, Sojka (Chytil 84), Zeleny; Provod (Sadilek 64), Sulc (Hlozek 64); Schick (Chory 64)

GOALS

0-1 Ladislav Krejci leaps to head past Kim Seung-gyu from a Vladimir Coufal long throw.
1-1 Lee Kang-in clips a delightful ball through to Hwang In-beom, who sits down two Czech players and dinks the ball inside the far post.
2-1 Hwang is released behind the Czech defence on the right by Paik Seung-ho and plays the ball into the six-yard box for Oh Hyeon-gyu to apply a cool first-time finish.

Equaliser ...Hwang In-beom celebrates with Son Heung-min

KOREA STUN CZECHS WITH COMEBACK

This was a clash of styles as South Korea tried to patiently create chances, while the Czechs took a more direct approach relying on set-pieces. Lee Kang-in controlled much of the early stages with his guile and subtle touches, and Son Heung-min had opportunities either side of half-time, but Miroslav Koubek's team opened the scoring with their first effort on target just before the hour mark. Undeterred, Korea stuck to their principles and scored two eye-catching goals to take the lead. The Czechs still caused issues, with a Tomas Soucek header ruled out for offside and Adam Hlozek and Michal Sadilek both calling Kim Seung-gyu into action with some impressive saves.

South Korea		Czech Republic
61.5%	Possession	38.5%
15(6)	Goal attempts (■ on target)	7(4)
4	Corners	5
9	Fouls	16

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 5PM

CZECH REPUBLIC (1) 1
(Sadilek 6)

SOUTH AFRICA (0) 1
(Mokoena 83 pen)

Atlanta Stadium
Att: 67,442 Ref: Tori Penso (USA)

CZECH REPUBLIC Kovar – Holes, Hranac, Krejci; Coufal, Darida (Sulc 55), Cerv (Zima 78), Sadilek (Soucek 67), Sojka (Zeleny 55); Schick, Hlozek (Provod 67)
■ Krejci
SOUTH AFRICA Williams – Mudau, Okon, Mbokazi, Modiba; Mbatha, Mokoena, Adams (Mofokeng 46); Maseko (Sebelebele 84), Rayners (Makgopa 66), Appollis
■ Mokoena, Mbatha

GOALS

1-0 Adam Hlozek runs onto Vladimir Coufal's long throw and crosses for Alexandr Sojka, who selflessly lays the ball off for Michal Sadilek to drive it past Ronwen Williams.
1-1 Thapelo Maseko's shot hits Pavel Sulc's hand inside the box and Teboho Mokoena sends Matej Kovar the wrong way from the spot.

Late equaliser ...Teboho Mokoena

MOKOENA PENALTY RESCUES A POINT

This match saw much-needed alterations for both teams after a disappointing start to the tournament, and Miroslav Koubek's changes initially paid dividends as the incoming Michal Sadilek opened the scoring for the Czechs. For large periods South Africa offered little, although Czech skipper Ladislav Krejci did make a vital block after Matej Kovar had dealt unconvincingly with a cross. Czech Republic had their chances, with Patrik Schick notably wasting headers at the beginning of each half. Their inability to add a buffer was punished by Teboho Mokoena, who gave *Bafana Bafana* a boost ahead of their final group game despite not being able to play in it after picking up his second booking of the finals. Both teams searched for a late winner, but Lukas Provod fired wide and David Zima blocked Aubrey Modiba's shot.

Czech Republic		South Africa
38%	Possession	62%
14(3)	Goal attempts (■ on target)	17(4)
5	Corners	5
12	Fouls	10

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
MEXICO	3	3	0	0	6	0	9
SOUTH AFRICA	3	1	1	1	2	3	4
SOUTH KOREA	3	1	0	2	2	3	3
CZECH REPUBLIC	3	0	1	2	2	6	1

GROUP A

FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 2AM

MEXICO (0) 1
(Romo 50)

SOUTH KOREA (0) 0

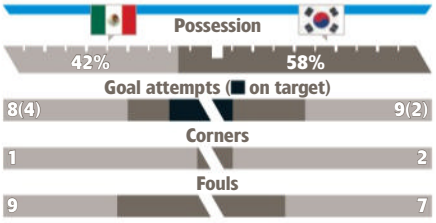
Estadio Guadalajara
Att: 45,522 Ref: Gustavo Tejera (Uru)

MEXICO Rangel – Sanchez, Alvarez, Vasquez, Gallardo; Gutierrez (Pineda 71), Lira, Romo (Vargas 71); Alvarado (Reyes 80), Jimenez (Gimenez 80), Quinones (Huerta 84)
SOUTH KOREA Kim Seung-gyu – Lee Han-beom, Kim Min-jae, Lee Gi-hyuk; Kim Moon-hwan (Eom Ji-sung 71), Hwang In-beom, Paik Seung-ho (Cho Gue-sung 77), Seol Young-woo (Yang Hyun-jun 71); Lee Kang-in, Lee Jae-sung (Hwang Hee-chan 57); Son Heung-min (Oh Hyeon-gyu 57)
■ Lee Kang-in, Paik Seung-ho

GOALS
1-0 A Mexico cross is headed high into the air and as goalkeeper Kim Seung-gyu tries to catch the ball, he collides with a defender and spills it, presenting Luis Romo with a gift of a goal.

Winner...Luis Romo scores for Mexico

MEXICO FIRST INTO THE LAST 32
Co-hosts Mexico became the first side to book their place in the knockout stages after a narrow win over South Korea. Both teams were passive both on and off the ball in the first half, with Julian Quinones' header being the only notable attempt as it brought an eye-catching save out of Kim Seung-gyu. There were even periods of the home fans booing while Mexico stood off the Koreans as they harmlessly passed the ball around, with the only sign that this was a World Cup contest coming from disputes between Erik Lira and Lee Kang-in. Jesus Gallardo showed Mexico's improved intent after the restart with a burst up the pitch that ended with his shot hitting the side netting, and the opening goal followed shortly after. It took until the final minutes for the Taegeuk Warriors to offer any response, with Raul Rangel making a double save to deny Cho Gue-sung and Yang Hyun-jun.



THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2AM

CZECH REPUBLIC (0) 0

MEXICO (0) 3
(M. Chavez 55, Quinones 61, Fidalgo 90+4)

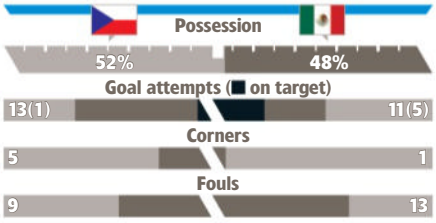
Estadio Azteca, Mexico City
Att: 80,824 Ref: Yael Falcon (Arg)

CZECH REPUBLIC Kovar – Holes (Soucek 64, Sojka 87), Hranac, Krejci; Coufal, Cerv (Chory 87), Sadilek, Doudera; Sulc, Visinsky (Provod 56); Hlozek (Schick 64)
MEXICO Rangel (Ochoa 78) – Sanchez, Montes, Reyes, M. Chavez (Gallardo 78); Mora (Fidalgo 72), Alvarez, Romo (Vargas 63); Alvarado, Martinez (Gimenez 63), Quinones

GOALS
0-1 Luis Romo holds off a number of red shirts before slipping the ball through for Mateo Chavez, who races forward and beats Matej Kovar for his first international goal.
0-2 Kovar stops Jorge Sanchez, but Tomas Holes kicks the ball straight at the right-back and Julian Quinones reacts to convert.
0-3 Kovar saves Santiago Gimenez's initial shot, but Roberto Alvarado lays the ball off for Alvaro Fidalgo to finish.

World Cup number six ...Guillermo Ochoa

OCHOA MAKES HISTORY IN *EL TRI* WIN
With Mexico already qualified as group winners, *El Tri* had the luxury of rotating for this clash, and the highlight saw 40-year-old goalkeeper Guillermo Ochoa come on in his sixth World Cup and handed the captain's armband. That moment arrived late on with the co-hosts cruising 2-0, but before that saw a somewhat attritional opening period with the primary entertainment coming from Vladimir Coufal and Mateo Chavez battling one another on the flank and Denis Visinsky looking bright in his first minutes of the World Cup, albeit failing to test Raul Rangel in the Mexican goal. With the Czechs drifting to defeat, their misery was compounded late on when Tomas Soucek went off with a serious ankle injury, while sub Alvaro Fidalgo added some gloss to the scoreline.



THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 2AM

SOUTH AFRICA (0) 1
(Maseko 63)

SOUTH KOREA (0) 0

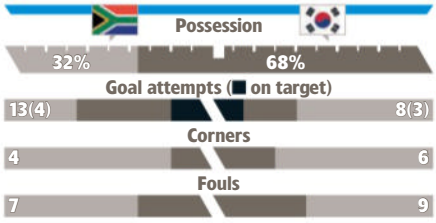
Estadio Monterrey
Att: 51,243 Ref: Facundo Tello (Arg)

SOUTH AFRICA Williams – Mudau, Okon, Mbokazi, Modiba; Mbatha, Sithole; Maseko (Rayners 75), Mofokeng (Adams 80), Appollis (Moremi 62); Makgopa
■ Modiba
SOUTH KOREA Kim Seung-gyu – Lee Han-beom, Kim Min-jae (Park Jin-seob 65), Lee Gi-hyuk; Seol Young-woo, Paik Seung-ho (Kim Jin-gyu 46), Hwang In-beom, Lee Tae-seok (Castrop 46); Lee Kang-in, Hwang Hee-chan (Son Heung-min 46); Oh Hyeon-gyu (Cho Gue-sung 74)
■ Cho Gue-sung

GOALS
1-0 Moments after coming on, Tshepang Moremi finds Thapelo Maseko in the box, and he takes a touch before finishing.

Into the knockouts... South Africa

BAFANA BAFANA ENSURE PROGRESS
Having endured a miserable opening game, and then leaving it late to equalise against Czech Republic, South Africa completed the ultimate turnaround with this win. South Korea defender Kim Min-jae was involved at both ends early on, having a header blocked on the line by Aubrey Modiba and then deflecting a Relebohile Mofokeng shot off target. Lee Kang-in then fired agonisingly wide, while Kim Seung-gyu saved Thalente Mbatha's shot and was grateful that Evidence Makgopa hit the follow-up straight at him. Hong Myung-bo made a triple change at half-time, but it was South Africa that took the lead. Ronwen Williams was called into action by a Park Jin-seob header, but maintained his clean sheet to help *Bafana Bafana* into the World Cup knockout rounds for the first time in their history. For South Korea, it was a nervy wait to see if they would go through as one of the highest-ranked third-place teams.



GROUP B

FRIDAY, JUNE 12, 8PM

CANADA (0) 1
(Larin 78)
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA (1) 1
(Lukic 21)

Toronto Stadium
Att: 43,002 Ref: Facundo Tello (Arg)

CANADA Crepeau – Johnston, De Fougerolles, Cornelius, Laryea; Buchanan (Ahmed 61), Kone, Eustaquio (Osorio 90+1), Millar (Shaffelburg 61); J. David (P. David 61), Oluwaseyi (Larin 76)
■ Johnston, De Fougerolles
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA Vasilj – Dedic, Katic, Muharemovic, Kolasinac (Burnic 84); Bajraktarevic (Sunjic 74), Tahirovic, Basic (Gigovic 62), Memic (Alajbegovic 74); Demirovic, Lukic (Bazdar 62)
■ Demirovic, Lukic, Katic

GOALS

0-1 Ivan Basic's corner is flicked on by Sead Kolasinac and Jovo Lukic beats Richie Laryea to the ball to head in his first international goal.
1-1 Ismael Kone drives forward and releases the ball for Promise David to flick it to Cyle Larin, who rolls Tarik Muharemovic and finishes with the help of a deflection off Nikola Katic.

Supersub... Cyle Larin

CANADA'S FIRST WORLD CUP POINT

With this match meaning so much to both nations involved for different reasons, there was plenty of intent shown from the off, and Bosnia & Herzegovina opened the scoring in between two Canada opportunities being wasted. The co-hosts did most of the attacking thereafter but were denied by a series of vital interventions, with Sead Kolasinac leading the defensive effort with a brilliant individual performance and Nikola Katic clearing Tani Oluwaseyi's header off the line. Jesse Marsch's substitutions gave Canada enough of a lift to eventually undo the resilient Bosnians, and supersub Cyle Larin almost turned Canada's first-ever World Cup point into three when the ball dropped to him in the six-yard box, only for his shot to be charged down by Muharemovic.

	Canada	Bosnia & Herzegovina
Possession	61%	39%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	13(4)	8(3)
Corners	9	4
Fouls	10	20

SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 8PM

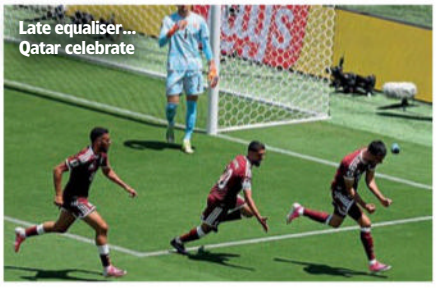
QATAR (0) 1
(Muheim 90+4 og)
SWITZERLAND (1) 1
(Embolo 17 pen)

San Francisco Bay Area Stadium
Att: 67,966 Ref: Said Martinez (Hon)

QATAR Abunada – Al Oui (Fathy 60), Miguel, Khoukhi, Ahmed; Gaber (Boudiaf 60), Madibo (Manai 79), Laye; Edmilson Junior (Al Haydos 89), Abdurisag (Alaaeldin 60), Afif
■ Abunada, Gaber
SWITZERLAND Kobel – Zakaria, Akanji, Elvedi, Rodriguez (Muheim 89); Aebischer (Rieder 65), Xhaka, Freuler (Jashari 89); Ndoye (Manzambi 65), Embolo, Vargas (Amdouni 79)
■ Zakaria

GOALS

0-1 Mahmoud Abunada hauls down Remo Freuler to concede a penalty, and Breel Embolo coolly sends Qatar's goalkeeper the wrong way.
1-1 Boualem Khoukhi shows more determination than Miro Muheim to meet Homam Ahmed's cross and the ball flies in off the Swiss defender's head.


Late equaliser... Qatar celebrate

QATARIS PUNISH PROFLIGATE SWISS

Amid sweltering conditions in San Francisco's Bay Area, and in dramatic fashion, Qatar won their first-ever World Cup point. The despondent Swiss were left to reflect on their wastefulness, scoring their only goal from the penalty spot despite having 26 shots, with Dan Ndoye missing the target on a couple of occasions and Michael Aebischer having his effort cleared off the line. Qatar keeper Mahmoud Abunada also deserves much credit, bouncing back from conceding a penalty by making a handful of top saves. Despite Swiss dominance, the result could have been even better for the Qataris, with Edmilson Junior squandering a couple of great opportunities and substitute Ahmed Alaaeldin having his tame shot saved late on.

	Qatar	Switzerland
Possession	32%	68%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	6(3)	26(7)
Corners	3	9
Fouls	12	11

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 8PM

SWITZERLAND (0) 4
(Manzambi 74, 90, Vargas 84, Xhaka 90+7 pen)
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA (0) 1
(Mahmic 90+3)

Los Angeles Stadium
Att: 70,026 Ref: Joao Pinheiro (Por)

SWITZERLAND Kobel – Widmer (Jaquez 86), Elvedi, Akanji, Rodriguez; Aebischer (Sow 71), Xhaka, Freuler; Rieder (Vargas 71); Embolo (Itten 89), Ndoye (Manzambi 71)
■ Elvedi
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA Vasilj – Dedic, Katic, Muharemovic, Kolasinac; Memic, Tahirovic (Basic 63), Sunjic (Hadziahmetovic 86), Alajbegovic (Mahmic 90+1); Demirovic (Lukic 86), Dzeko (Bajraktarevic 64)
■ Dedic, Dzeko ■ Muharemovic

GOALS

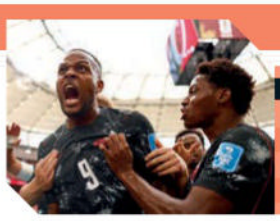
1-0 Bosnia's defence fail to clear Ruben Vargas' cross and Johan Manzambi volleys home.
2-0 Breel Embolo squares to Vargas, who calmly places his shot into the bottom corner.
3-0 Vargas plays a one-two with Granit Xhaka down the left before teeing up Manzambi for a clinical first-time finish.
3-1 Gregor Kobel punches a corner towards the edge of the box, where Ermin Mahmic meets the ball with a venomous volley.
4-1 Memic slides in on Djibril Sow to concede a penalty. Nikola Vasilj dives the right way, but can't keep out Xhaka's spot-kick.

Game-changer ...Ruben Vargas

SWISS SUBS TRANSFORM THE GAME

Murat Yakin's Switzerland side bounced back in emphatic style after their draw with Qatar, but it wasn't until the late introduction of subs Johan Manzambi and Ruben Vargas that they truly got the better of Bosnia in LA. Their previous lacklustre attack burst into life once the duo were on the pitch, linking up with pace and electricity. Bosnia's cause wasn't helped by Tarik Muharemovic seeing red for a last-ditch tackle on Breel Embolo, with the majority of the game's action all taking place in the final 15 minutes.

	Switzerland	Bosnia & Herzegovina
Possession	62%	38%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	13(7)	5(3)
Corners	7	3
Fouls	7	18



	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SWITZERLAND	3	2	1	0	7	3	7
CANADA	3	1	1	1	8	3	4
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA	3	1	1	1	5	6	4
QATAR	3	0	1	2	2	10	1

GROUP B

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 11PM

CANADA (3) 6
(Larin 16, J. David 29, 45+3, 90+2, Saliba 64, Manai 75 og)

QATAR (0) 0

BC Place Vancouver
Att: 52,497 Ref: Cristian Garay (Chi)

CANADA Crepeau – Johnston, De Fougerolles (Shaffelburg 72), Cornelius (Bombito 46), Laryea; Buchanan (Sigur 83), Kone (Saliba 57), Eustaquio, Ahmed (Oluwaseyi 72); J. David, Larin
■ Cornelius
QATAR Abunada – Al Oui, Miguel, Khoukhi, Ahmed; Gaber (Manai 46), Madibo, Laye; Edmilson Junior (Fathy 46, Mendes 87), Abdurisag (Al Brake 40), Afif (Al Hussein 59)
■ Fathy ■ Ahmed, Madibo

GOALS
1-0 Mahmoud Abunada saves Jonathan David's shot, but Cyle Larin scores the rebound.
2-0 Tajon Buchanan's deflected strike loops to David, who lets the ball drop and lashes it in.
3-0 Abunada keeps out Larin's header, but David reacts quickest to nod home.
4-0 Nathan Saliba fires a free-kick in off the post and celebrates by holding up the shirt of the injured Ismael Kone, who he replaced.
5-0 Mohamed Manai attempts to clear Jacob Shaffelburg's shot but slices into his own net.
6-0 David controls Saliba's attempted shot and instinctively finishes to complete his hat-trick.

Kone tribute... Nathan Saliba pays respect to his injured team-mate

KONE INJURY SOURS CANADA WIN
Both teams won their first World Cup point last time out, but it was only ever going to be Canada who added a first win. They completely outclassed Qatar here, and were already 2-0 up when Homam Ahmed was sent off after 33 minutes. The co-hosts received a major blow as Kone suffered a broken leg after a challenge by Assim Madibo, who was duly red carded. The Canadians smelt blood against Julen Lopetegui's nine men, continuing to dominate and adding three more goals to seal an emphatic win.

Possession	79%	21%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	32(10)	2(0)
Corners	19	1
Fouls	9	10

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 8PM

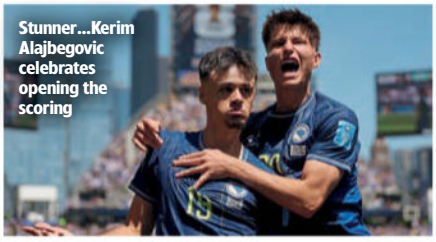
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA (2) 3
(Alajbegovic 29, Abunada 34 og, Mahmic 80)

QATAR (1) 1
(Al Haydos 42)

Seattle Stadium
Att: 66,925 Ref: Jesus Valenzuela (Ven)

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA Vasilj – Malic (Memic 46), Katic (Hadzikadunic 63), Radeljic, Kolasinac; Bajraktarevic, Basic, Sunjic (Tahirovic 46), Alajbegovic (Burnic 82); Demirovic, Dzeko (Mahmic 64)
■ Mahmic
QATAR Abunada – Miguel, Khoukhi, Laye, Al Brake; Gaber (Hatem 46), Fathy (Manai 79), Boudiaf (Ali 72); Edmilson Junior (Alaaeldin 79), Afif, Al Haydos (Al Ganehi 55)
■ Fathy

GOALS
1-0 Kerim Alajbegovic weaves his way through a host of Qatari defenders before smashing in an outrageous strike from the edge of the box.
2-0 Sultan Al Brake cuts out Edin Dzeko's pullback but diverts the ball past Mahmoud Abunada, who is credited with the own goal.
2-1 An inviting cross is met by Edmilson Junior, whose cutback allows Qatar captain Hassan Al Haydos to finish inside the six-yard box.
3-1 Qatar fail to clear their lines and Ermin Mahmic pounces on the loose ball to finish.


Stunner...Kerim Alajbegovic celebrates opening the scoring

THIRD PLACE FOR BUOYANT BOSNIA
In this must-win game for either side to have any chance of progressing to the knockout stages, it was Bosnia & Herzegovina who proved the more plucky. Sergej Barbarez's men showed real intent from the off, with Ermedin Demirovic and Ivan Basic coming close before teenager Alajbegovic broke the deadlock with a worldy strike. Captain Edin Dzeko, winning his 150th cap, was instrumental in Bosnia's second goal, and the 40-year-old also hit the post. Losing captain and goalscorer Hassan Al Haydos to injury was a major blow for Qatar, who failed to make up the deficit in the second half before conceding a killer third and being sent home.

Possession	54%	46%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	14(5)	9(3)
Corners	5	5
Fouls	9	14

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 8PM

SWITZERLAND (0) 2
(Vargas 46, Manzambi 57)

CANADA (0) 1
(P. David 76)

BC Place Vancouver
Att: 52,497 Ref: Ramon Abatti (Bra)

SWITZERLAND Kobel – Jaquez (Widmer 74), Elvedi, Akanji, Rodriguez; Freuler, Xhaka; Sow (Aebischer 74), Manzambi (Fassnacht 85), Vargas (Ndoye 80); Embolo (Itten 85)
■ Xhaka
CANADA Crepeau – Johnston, De Fougerolles, Cornelius, Laryea (Shaffelburg 83); Buchanan (P. David 74), Saliba, Choiniere (Eustaquio 58), Ahmed (Millar 58); J. David, Larin (Oluwaseyi 58)
■ Larin, Millar

GOALS
1-0 Johan Manzambi is released behind Canada's defence and finds Ruben Vargas, who controls and smashes the ball into the net.
2-0 Breel Embolo lays the ball off to Manzambi whose shot goes under Maxime Crepeau.
2-1 Nathan Saliba takes a sublime touch and squares the ball for Promise David, who converts on the stretch 73 seconds after coming on.

Top spot secured...Switzerland celebrate with their fans

SWITZERLAND BEAT HOSTS TO TOP SPOT
This shootout for first place saw Switzerland's class come to the fore, but co-hosts Canada were more than a match for them on home soil. In a tetchy first half, Breel Embolo had his opportunities, while Cyle Larin and Ali Ahmed saw an attempt each saved for Canada. As had been the case against Bosnia & Herzegovina, Manzambi and Vargas provided the spark for Switzerland to secure victory in a second half that had plenty more action. Nico Elvedi did well to block a Jonathan David attempt, but his namesake Promise provided hope for Canada. Ultimately, the co-hosts couldn't get the goal that would have seen them top the group and play their first knockout match in Vancouver. Nonetheless, they'll still feel pride at qualifying for the knockout stages for the first time.

Possession	55%	45%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	6(4)	13(7)
Corners	2	7
Fouls	19	13

GROUP C

SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 11PM

BRAZIL (1) 1
(Vinicius Junior 32)

MOROCCO (1) 1
(Saibari 21)

New York/New Jersey Stadium
Att: 80,663 Ref: Slavko Vincic (Svn)

BRAZIL Alisson – Ibanez (Danilo 46), Marquinhos, Gabriel, Douglas Santos; Casemiro (Fabinho 46), Bruno Guimaraes (Danilo Santos 80); Paqueta (Matheus Cunha 61), Raphinha, Vinicius Junior; Igor Thiago (Luiz Henrique 62)
■ Casemiro, Ibanez
MOROCCO Bounou – Hakimi, Diop, Riad, Mazraoui (Salah-Eddine 80); El Aynaoui, Bouaddi; Brahim (Talbi 65), Ounahi (El Mourabet 65), El Khannouss (Amaimouni 80); Saibari (Rahimi 89)

GOALS

0-1 Brahim Diaz splits Brazil open with a perfectly weighted ball through the middle that Ismael Saibari sprints onto ahead of Alisson and lifts over the goalkeeper.
1-1 Vinicius Junior cuts inside Neil El Aynaoui and smashes the ball inside the far post.

Moment of magic... Vinicius Junior

VINI JR COMES TO BRAZIL'S RESCUE

In an entertaining first half, both teams had a period of control but scored at times when they had less of it. Brazil No.9 Igor Thiago made a mess of a header before either goal was scored and Achraf Hakimi showed intent for Morocco, while Lucas Paqueta's instinctive shot was denied shortly before half-time. It was a quieter second half but Brazil had the better opportunities with Yassine Bounou denying a venomous Thiago strike then collecting a shot that Raphinha sent straight at him, before he had to rush out to reach an underhit Issa Diop backpass ahead of the winger. Despite that, Alisson had to take vital action late on, saving Neil El Aynaoui's shot from range and diving to stop substitute Ayoube Amaimouni's rebound. In a match involving so many established names, it was 18-year-old Ayyoub Bouaddi that impressed throughout.

	Brazil	Morocco
Possession	51%	49%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	12(5)	3(14)
Corners	6	2
Fouls	16	14

SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 2AM

HAITI (0) 0

SCOTLAND (1) 1
(McGinn 28)

Boston Stadium
Att: 64,146 Ref: Mustapha Ghorbal (Alg)

HAITI Placide – Arcus, Ade, Delcroix, Experience; Deedson (Casimir 61), Jean-Jacques, Bellegarde, Providence (Fortune 85); Pierrot, Isidor (Joseph 76)
■ Bellegarde
SCOTLAND Gunn – Hickey (Patterson 75), Hanley, Hendry, Robertson; Gannon-Doak (Christie 75), McTominay, Ferguson, McGinn (Curtis 83); Shankland (McLean 83), Adams (Dykes 75)
■ Hickey, Curtis, McLean

GOALS

0-1 With some smart centre-forward play, Che Adams controls the ball superbly and lays it off to Ben Gannon-Doak before getting into the box to meet the cross, only to see his effort saved. But the ball rebounds to John McGinn, whose shot is deflected in via a deflection.

Winner... John McGinn

McGINN STARTS SCOTTISH PARTY

The chant "No Scotland, no party" could be heard across Boston, but this game was all about getting the job done in the nation's first World Cup match since 1998. They did just that thanks to John McGinn's goal, although Steve Clarke's side could have scored sooner as Scott McTominay hit the post. Haiti's wait for World Cup football had been even longer, with their only other finals appearance coming in 1974, and they certainly carried their own threat. Angus Gunn spilled Ruben Providence's shot shortly after the half-hour mark and reacted to deny Frantzdy Pierrot. Late on, Jean-Ricner Bellegarde and Providence had shots blocked by Scottish defenders Grant Hanley and Nathan Patterson respectively, while Pierrot was left in disbelief when his header went agonisingly wide as Scotland clung on to battle their way to a first World Cup victory since 1990.

	Haiti	Scotland
Possession	54%	46%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	15(2)	9(2)
Corners	4	3
Fouls	23	21

FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 11PM

SCOTLAND (0) 0

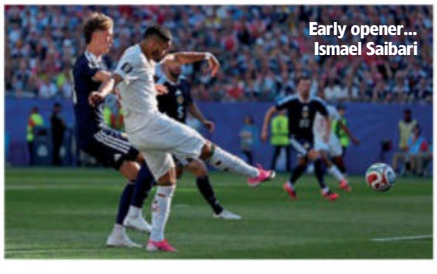
MOROCCO (1) 1
(Saibari 2)

Boston Stadium
Att: 64,146 Ref: Ilgiz Tantashev (Uzb)

SCOTLAND Gunn – Patterson (Ralston 89), Hanley, Hendry, Robertson; McGinn (Stewart 89), Christie (McLean 71), Ferguson, Tierney (Gannon-Doak 60); McTominay; Adams (Dykes 71)
■ Robertson
MOROCCO Bounou – Hakimi, Diop, Riad, Mazraoui; Bouaddi, El Aynaoui; Brahim (Amaimouni 84), Ounahi (El Mourabet 90), El Khannouss (Talbi 84); Saibari (Rahimi 84)
■ Diop

GOALS

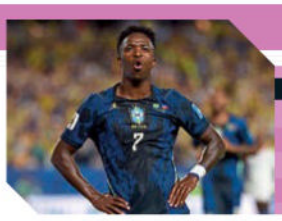
0-1 Ismael Saibari manages to stay onside before running onto Brahim Diaz's pass and smashing the ball past Angus Gunn.


Early opener... Ismael Saibari

SAIBARI'S EARLY STRIKE SINKS SCOTLAND

It took just 70 seconds for Ismael Saibari to capitalise on Scotland's initial shakiness, which persisted for far longer than Steve Clarke would have liked. Morocco had chances to extend their lead but didn't take them, with Angus Gunn doing well to stop the ball after Achraf Hakimi had got a toe to it, and they were eventually made to battle as Neil El Aynaoui got a bloodied mouth before the break and a ripped shirt after it. Jack Hendry made impressive blocks to deny Saibari and Brahim Diaz, and Gunn had to save a Bilal El Khannouss header from a corner that came after the first of those blocks. Scotland stayed in the game and Scott McTominay attempted to get his side back on level terms, but they failed to test Yassine Bounou in the Moroccan goal. The Atlas Lions did more than enough to stay in front and even could have had a second through substitutes Chemsdine Talbi or Ayoube Amaimouni. A personal contest between Hakimi and John McGinn added extra intrigue.

	Scotland	Morocco
Possession	41%	59%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	6(0)	12(2)
Corners	2	5
Fouls	11	8



GROUP C

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BRAZIL	3	2	1	0	7	1	7
MOROCCO	3	2	1	0	6	3	7
SCOTLAND	3	1	0	2	1	4	3
HAITI	3	0	0	3	2	8	0

SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 1.30AM

BRAZIL (3) 3
(Matheus Cunha 23, 36, Vinicius Junior 45+3)

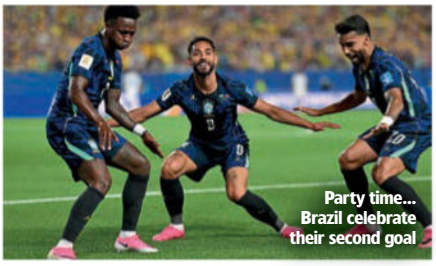
HAITI (0) 0

Philadelphia Stadium
Att: 68,324 Ref: Alejandro Hernandez (Spa)

BRAZIL Alisson – Danilo, Marquinhos, Gabriel, Douglas Santos; Bruno Guimaraes (Ederson Silva 81), Casemiro, Paqueta (Martinelli 64); Raphinha (Rayan 40), Matheus Cunha (Endrick 64), Vinicius Junior (Danilo Santos 81)
■ Douglas Santos
HAITI Placide – Arcus (Simon 46), Duverne, Ade, Delcroix, Experience; Casimir (Deedson 62), Jean-Jacques, Bellegarde (Etienne 81), Providence (Joseph 71); Pierrot (Isidor 46)
■ Arcus, Pierrot, Jean-Jacques

GOALS

1-0 Johny Placide palms Vinicius Junior's initial shot into a dangerous area, and Hannes Delcroix can't stop the ball going in off Matheus Cunha.
2-0 Brazil win the ball back in the middle and Vinicius Junior roams forward being slipping in Cunha, who smashes a shot in at the near post.
3-0 Lucas Paqueta releases Vinicius Junior in the inside-left channel, and the winger streaks clear before sliding his shot past Placide.


Party time... Brazil celebrate their second goal

FIRST-HALF BLITZ BLOWS AWAY HAITI

Haiti became the first team to be elimintated from the World Cup after defeat to Brazil. The Haitians were resilient but the quality of Vinicius Junior and Matheus Cunha put the result well beyond their reach by half-time. If anyone of a Brazilian persuasion was left disappointed by the opening 45 minutes then it was Raphinha, who had a goal ruled out and dinked a shot wide before going off injured. Haiti kept going after the break, with Ricardo Ade's glanced header forcing an instinctive save from Alisson. Teenage striker Endrick was denied by the offside flag, but the second half remained goalless, keeping the scoreline respectable.

	Brazil	Haiti
Possession	57%	43%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	8(5)	7(3)
Corners	4	4
Fouls	13	14

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 11PM

MOROCCO (2) 4
(Hakimi 39, Saibari 45+1, Rahimi 78, Yassine 89)

HAITI (2) 2
(Bounou 10 og, Isidor 43)

Atlanta Stadium
Att: 68,239 Ref: Danny Makkelie (Ned)

MOROCCO Bounou – Hakimi, Halhal, Riad, Salah-Eddine (Mazraoui 83); El Aynaoui (El Mourabet 83), Amrabat; Brahim (Ounahi 70), Saibari (Rahimi 70), El Khannouss; El Kaabi (Yassine 70)
HAITI Placide – Duverne (Arcus 80), Ade, Delcroix, Experience; Casimir, Jean-Jacques (Simon 80), Bellegarde, Providence (Nazon 67); Isidor (Deedson 67); Joseph (Pierrot 83)
■ Placide, Nazon, Casimir

GOALS

0-1 Jean-Kevin Duverne flies past Anass Salah-Eddine and delivers a low cross for Lenny Joseph, whose flick goes in off Yassine Bounou.
1-1 Bilal El Khannouss' deflected strike is saved by Johny Placide, but Achraf Hakimi reaches the ball ahead of Hannes Delcroix to convert.
1-2 Wilson Isidor smashes a sensational shot from outside the box into the top corner for a Goal of the Tournament contender.
2-2 Ismael Saibari scores for the third group game in a row after finding the bottom corner with a first-time finish from Hakimi's cutback.
3-2 Chadi Riad gets a flick on Hakimi's corner and Soufiane Rahimi scores.
4-2 When Carlens Arcus stops, thinking the ball is going out, Rahimi keeps it in and squares for Gessime Yassine to score.

Tap in...Hakimi equalises for Morocco

HAITI GO DOWN FIGHTING

Morocco were twice stunned by Haitian goals, but came back both times before eventually going ahead in the second half and wrapping up the win late on to confirm their ticket to the knockout rounds. Duckens Nazon's venomous free-kick was saved in the final moments, but Haiti could be proud of their performance despite leaving the World Cup without a point.

	Morocco	Haiti
Possession	69%	31%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	22(11)	9(2)
Corners	9	1
Fouls	10	18

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 11PM

SCOTLAND (0) 0

BRAZIL (2) 3
(Vinicius Junior 7, 45+3, Cunha 60)

Miami Stadium
Att: 64,478 Ref: Cesar Arturo Ramos (Mex)

SCOTLAND Gunn – Patterson (Ralston 82), Hendry, McKenna, Robertson (Tierney 46); Ferguson, McLean; Gannon-Doak (Christie 82), McTominay, McGinn (Curtis 90+1); Shankland (Adams 90+1)
■ Christie
BRAZIL Alisson – Danilo, Marquinhos, Gabriel, Douglas Santos (Alex Sandro 82); Bruno Guimaraes, Casemiro (Fabinho 65), Paqueta (Martinelli 66); Rayan (Endrick 82), Matheus Cunha (Neymar 76), Vinicius Junior
■ Danilo, Fabinho

GOALS

0-1 Scott McKenna's loose pass is blocked by Rayan, and Vinicius Junior punishes the mistake by touching the ball past goalkeeper Angus Gunn and sliding it into the vacant net.
0-2 Bruno Guimaraes' cross evades Gunn and Nathan Patterson before being headed in by Vinicius Junior at the back post.
0-3 Bruno Guimaraes gets into the box and presents Matheus Cunha with a simple finish.

Gift...Vini Jr celebrates Brazil's opening goal

BRAZIL GO TOP, SCOTLAND GO HOME

A point would have all but confirmed Scotland's spot in the knockouts, but they were the masters of their own downfall after some shambolic errors against Brazil. After gifting *Selecao* the lead, it looked like they had given up another goal until Vinicius Junior was pulled up by VAR for a foul on Jack Hendry. Lewis Ferguson then cleared a Matheus Cunha attempt off the line, but more shaky Scottish defending was on display as Vinicius and Cunha added further goals. And while Scotland were trying to secure the goals that could aid their fading hopes of progressing, a notable moment for Brazil saw Neymar come on for his first minutes of this World Cup.

	Scotland	Brazil
Possession	46%	54%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	14(5)	21(9)
Corners	7	7
Fouls	10	11

GROUP D

SATURDAY, JUNE 13, 2AM

UNITED STATES (3) 4
(Bobadilla 7 og, Balogun 31, 45+5, Reyna 90+8)

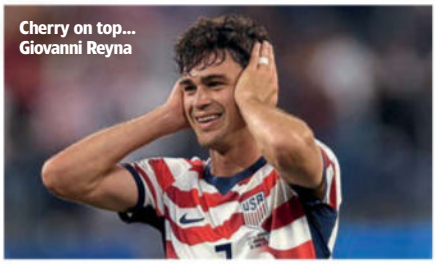
PARAGUAY (0) 1
(Mauricio 73)

Los Angeles Stadium
Att: 70,492 Ref: Danny Makkelie (Ned)

UNITED STATES Freese – Freeman, Richards, Ream, A. Robinson; Adams, Tillman (Reyna 82); Dest (Weah 72), McKennie, Pulisic (Berhalter 46); Balogun (Pepi 72)
■ Adams
PARAGUAY Gill – Caceres (Velazquez 79), G. Gomez, Alderete, Alonso; D. Gomez (Romero Gamarra 80), Cubas, Bobadilla (Mauricio 46), Almiron (Sosa 79); Sanabria (Arce 62), Enciso
■ Caceres, Almiron, D. Gomez, Arce, Alonso

GOALS

1-0 Christian Pulisic and Weston McKennie link up on the left, and the latter's pass in the box is turned into the net by Damian Bobadilla.
2-0 Pulisic again breaks up the left, this time teeing up Folarin Balogun for a first-time finish.
3-0 Balogun is released by Malik Tillman, gets the better of Omar Alderete and Gustavo Gomez then bends the ball into the top corner.
3-1 A speculative long ball forward from goalkeeper Orlando Gill leads to Julio Enciso laying the ball off for Mauricio to finish.
4-1 Giovanni Reyna collects the ball on the edge of the box and takes a few steps before hitting a beautiful Trivela into the corner.


Cherry on top... Giovanni Reyna

REYNA CAPS OFF USA'S OPENING PARTY

The first goal provided a neat encapsulation of the first half, with Christian Pulisic very much at the forefront of the USA's electric attacking play and Paraguay offering only a meek response. In truth, the 3-0 scoreline could have been even greater, with VAR ruling out another Folarin Balogun goal for offside and Chris Richards heading agonisingly wide. Gustavo Alfaro's side improved after the break but the result had long been decided in a perfect start for the US.

Possession	65%	35%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	16(6)	9(1)
Corners	3	1
Fouls	13	17

SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 5AM

AUSTRALIA (1) 2
(Irankunda 27, Metcalfe 75)

TURKEY (0) 0

BC Place Vancouver
Att: 52,497 Ref: Jesus Valenzuela (Ven)

AUSTRALIA Beach – Italiano (Geria 74), Circati, Souttar, Burgess, Bos (Behich 84); Metcalfe, O'Neill, Okon-Engstler (Irvine 84), Irankunda (Velupillay 61); Toure (Yengi 74)
TURKEY Cakir – Celik (Muldur 81), Demiral, Bardakci, Kadioglu; Yuksek (Ozcan 81), Calhanoglu; Guler, Kokcu (Akgun 62), Yilmaz (Yildiz 46); Akturkoglu (Gul 85)
■ Akgun

GOALS

1-0 Paul Okon-Engstler unlocks Turkey's defence with a ball that Nestory Irankunda races onto and pokes past Merih Demiral, before sliding his shot past Ugurcan Cakir.
2-0 Connor Metcalfe strides forward and finds the bottom corner with a brilliant left-footed shot from outside the box.

Aussie hero ...Nestory Irankunda scores

DARK HORSES FALL AT FIRST HURDLE

Tipped by many as the team to watch at these finals, Turkey controlled possession for most of the game but were largely limited to speculative shots from outside the box by Australia's resolute defence. Allied to that was the counter-attacking outlet pace of Nestory Irankunda, who became his country's youngest-ever World Cup goalscorer and celebrated by mimicking the celebration of former Socceroo Tim Cahill. Goalkeeper Patrick Beach, a surprise selection on just his third cap, proved equal to anything that got past his defence, saving free-kicks from Arda Guler and Hakan Calhanoglu and doing well to deny Kerem Akturkoglu's volley. By then, Connor Metcalfe had already done what Turkey had tried so often and scored from range. Australia held out until the end to secure their first opening-game win since 2006.

Possession	28%	72%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	9(4)	30(8)
Corners	5	8
Fouls	12	4

FRIDAY, JUNE 19, 8PM

UNITED STATES (2) 2
(Burgess 11 og, Freeman 43)

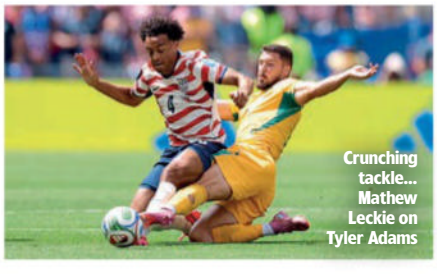
AUSTRALIA (0) 0

Seattle Stadium
Att: 66,925 Ref: Felix Zwayer (Ger)

UNITED STATES Freese – Freeman, Richards, Ream; Dest (Scally 80), McKennie (Reyna 90+6), Adams, Tillman, A. Robinson (Trusty 80); Pepi (Berhalter 74), Balogun (Wright 90+6)
■ A. Robinson, Balogun, Richards
AUSTRALIA Beach – Italiano, Circati, Souttar, Burgess (Geria 46), Bos; Leckie (Volpato 61), O'Neill, Okon-Engstler (Irvine 78), Velupillay (Metcalfe 46); Toure (Irankunda 46)
■ Bos, Circati, Souttar, Italiano

GOALS

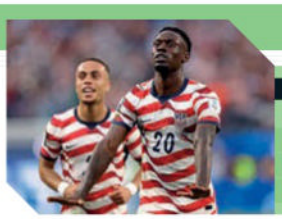
1-0 Folarin Balogun makes a burst down the left and fires in a cross that Cameron Burgess diverts into the roof of his own net.
2-0 The ball loops up from Sergino Dest's blocked shot and Alex Freeman bravely beats Patrick Beach to head it in, with VAR overruling the linesman's initial offside flag.


Crunching tackle... Mathew Leckie on Tyler Adams

US CONFIDENCE PROVEN RIGHT

All the pre-match talk was of the Australians being fired up by a sense of disrespect from the co-hosts, with US pundit and former player Mike Grella describing the fixture as a "layup" for Mauricio Pochettino's side, but instead it was the Stars & Stripes who provided all of the energy and urgency in the first half. Tony Popovic responded to his side's disappointing display with a triple change at half-time, and there was some improvement for the Socceroos in a heated second half, but they couldn't find the goal that might have spread some nerves around the spiritual home of the USMNT, with Harry Souttar particularly cuplable for air-kicking a chance inside the six-yard box. In a game of energy and aggression, even referee Felix Zwayer went down with cramp.

Possession	62%	38%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	10(2)	5(2)
Corners	7	4
Fouls	12	16



	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
UNITED STATES	3	2	0	1	8	4	6
AUSTRALIA	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
PARAGUAY	3	1	1	1	2	4	4
TURKEY	3	1	0	2	3	5	3

GROUP D

SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 4AM

TURKEY (0) 0

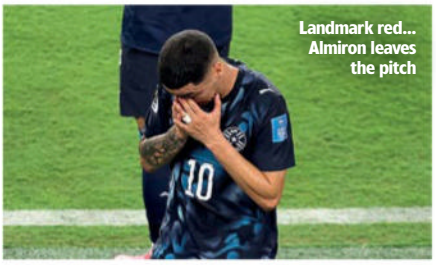
PARAGUAY (1) 1
(Galarza 2)

San Francisco Bay Area Stadium
Att: 68,827 Ref: Ivan Barton (Slv)

TURKEY Cakir – Muldur, Demiral, Bardakci (Kokcu 86), Kadioglu (Elmali 70); Calhanoglu, Yuksek (Uzun 60); Akgun (Gul 60), Guler, Yildiz; Akturkoglu (Yilmaz 46)
Elmali
PARAGUAY Gill – Caceres (Maidana 81), G. Gomez, Alderete, Alonso; Almiron, Cubas, D. Gomez (Velazquez 67), Galarza (Canale 90+2); Pitta (Bobadilla 46), Enciso (Avalos 90+2)
Galarza Almiron

GOALS

0-1 Matias Galarza collects the ball and fizzes his shot into the bottom corner from range.



Landmark red... Almiron leaves the pitch

PARAGUAY'S TEN MEN ELIMINATE TURKEY

It took just 64 seconds for Galarza to open the scoring, laying the foundations for a gutsy, hard-fought defensive display from Paraguay. That template of the game was further locked into place by Miguel Almiron's red card for covering his mouth in a confronation with Mert Muldur – the first time a player had been red-carded in the World Cup under the new ruling – and Gustavo Alfaro made his approach clear by taking striker Isidro Pitta off ahead of the restart. It was Turkey's defenders who came closest to equalising, with Muldur's header hitting the crossbar and the post but somehow staying out in the 35th minute, and Merih Demiral testing Orlando Gill with a long-range shot, before both players headed wide as the second half wore on. Shots continued to rain down but not enough to seriously trouble the imposing Gill. When the final whistle blew, devastated Turkey players lay strewn across the pitch as they were eliminated, while Paraguay could begin to look ahead.

	Turkey	Paraguay
Possession	78.5%	21.5%
Goal attempts (on target)	32(5)	7(2)
Corners	12	0
Fouls	14	15

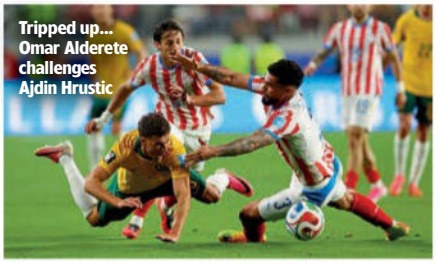
FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 3AM

PARAGUAY (0) 0

AUSTRALIA (0) 0

San Francisco Bay Area Stadium
Att: 68,827 Ref: Clement Turpin (Fra)

PARAGUAY Gill – Caceres, Velazquez, G. Gomez, Alderete (Canale 84), Maidana (Mauricio 46); D. Gomez (Bobadilla 90+2), Cubas, Galarza (Alonso 90+2); Avalos (Arce 67), Enciso
D. Gomez
AUSTRALIA Beach – Circati, Souttar, Herrington; Bos, O'Neill, Irvine (Okon-Engstler 84), Behich; Volpato (Hrustic 58), Metcalfe; Irankunda (Yengi 84)
Irvine



Tripped up... Omar Alderete challenges Ajdin Hrustic

STALEMATE SEES BOTH PROGRESS

While Group D's other final match was a goalfest, this one largely alternated between being a battle and completely flat. Not that it was totally void of competitiveness as Aiden O'Neill and Connor Metcalfe would both attest, with the former on the receiving end of a crunching tackle from Juan Jose Caceres and the latter requiring a bandage after taking a boot to the head from Andres Cubas. Jackson Irvine earned a yellow card for a lunge on Julio Enciso, who was later sent into the advertising boards by Alessandro Circati. Australia showed the greater attacking intent with Irvine having a shot tipped over and looping a header over in the first half, and Cristian Volpato seeing a shot palmed away. Perhaps the most significant moments for the wider tournament were Diego Gomez being shown a yellow for bringing down Australia's standout performer Jordan Bos, meaning he would miss Paraguay's next game, and Omar Alderete trudging off with an injury. Both teams made a late push for victory, with Bos sending an attempt agonisingly wide and Patrick Beach getting down to a low shot from Mauricio, but in the end a point each was enough for both sides to progress.

	Paraguay	Australia
Possession	44%	56%
Goal attempts (on target)	7(2)	12(5)
Corners	1	3
Fouls	9	6

FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 3AM

TURKEY (2) 3
(Guler 10, Yilmaz 31, Ayhan 90+8)

UNITED STATES (1) 2
(Trusty 3, Berhalter 49)

Los Angeles Stadium
Att: 70,492 Ref: Mustapha Ghorbal (Alg)

TURKEY Cakir – Celik (Soyuncu 84), Kabak, Bardakci; Aydin (Muldur 90+2), Ozcan, Kokcu (Ayhan 88), Elmali; Guler, Yildiz (Uzun 84); Yilmaz (Kahveci 90+2)
UNITED STATES Turner – Scally (Freeman 77), M. Robinson, McKenzie, Trusty; McKennie (Tillman 86), Berhalter, Reyna (Dest 76); Aaronson (Zendejas 77), Pepi, Weah (Pulisic 58)
Berhalter

GOALS

0-1 Auston Trusty controls Sebastian Berhalter's corner and smashes his shot in.
1-1 Arda Guler outsmarts Mark McKenzie, and Baris Alper Yilmaz gets the ball back to Turkey's No.8 for him to finish.
2-1 A passage of slick passing culminates in Orkun Kokcu's shot going in off Yilmaz.
2-2 Turkey fail to convincingly clear McKenzie's long throw and Berhalter lashes his shot in from the edge of the penalty box.
3-2 Trusty gets a touch on Can Uzun's attempt but Kaan Ayhan reacts to convert.

Sliding in...Kaan Ayhan's late winner

TURKEY GO OUT ON A HIGH

Turkey endured a torrid opening two matches, and it looked like they were in for another tough time when they conceded inside three minutes. Despite that, and even with both teams having rotated, this was a sign of what could have been for Vincenzo Montella's side. Having previously hit a total of 62 shots without scoring, all three of their attempts on target resulted in goals this time around. The second of those came just moments after United States defender Mark McKenzie had a goal ruled out for offside in a sign of the co-hosts' pending disappointment, although they still went on to top the group.

	Turkey	United States
Possession	47%	53%
Goal attempts (on target)	9(3)	18(7)
Corners	2	9
Fouls	13	13

GROUP E

SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 6PM

GERMANY (3) 7
(Nmecha 6, Schlotterbeck 38, Havertz 45+5 pen, 88, Musiala 47, Brown 68, Undav 78)

CURACAO (1) 1
(Comenencia 21)

Houston Stadium
Att: 68,021 Ref: Jalal Jayed (Mar)

GERMANY Neuer – Kimmich (Anton 83), Tah (Rudiger 73), Schlotterbeck, Brown (Raum 73); Nmecha (Goretzka 73), Pavlovic; Sane, Musiala (Undav 64), Wirtz; Havertz
CURACAO Room – Floranus, Bazoer, Obispo, Fonville; Comenencia, L. Bacuna, J. Bacuna; Chong (Kastaner 83); Locadia (Margaritha 65), Hansen (Antonisse 46)

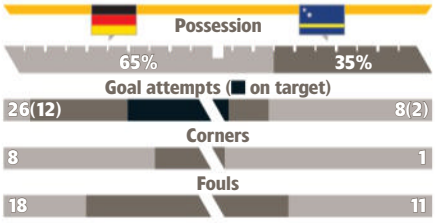
GOALS

1-0 Felix Nmecha curls home from just inside the box after a brilliant one-two.
1-1 Nico Schlotterbeck pokes an attempted clearance into the path of Livano Comenencia, who finishes with the aid of a slight deflection.
2-1 An unmarked Schlotterbeck restores the lead with a glancing header from a corner.
3-1 Nmecha is upended for a penalty and Kai Havertz sends the keeper the wrong way.
4-1 Joshua Kimmich slides the ball into the box for the on-running Jamal Musiala, who finds the bottom corner with a cute cross-shot.
5-1 Set up by a Deniz Undav flick, Nathaniel Brown's volley does the rest.
6-1 Germany carve open Curacao once again. Havertz crosses, Kimmich recycles and substitute Undav clinically finishes.
7-1 Undav with the defence-splitting through ball, Havertz running on to finish with style.

First international goal...Nathaniel Brown

GERMANY RUIN CURACAO'S BIG DAY OUT

A class apart throughout, Germany could have won by an even greater margin, bewitching a brave but limited Curacao side with their attacking brilliance. Curacao's consolation? Their first-ever World Cup goal, a moment to savour for the smallest country to compete in the finals.



MONDAY, JUNE 15, 12AM

IVORY COAST (0) 1
(Amad 90)

ECUADOR (0) 0

Philadelphia Stadium
Att: 68,274 Ref: Francois Letexier (Fra)

IVORY COAST Y. Fofana – Doue (Kossounou 89), Singo, Agbadou, Konan; Y. Diomande, Kessie, S. Fofana (Sangare 77), Toure (Amad 56); Pepe (Inao Oulai 77), Wahi (Bonny 56)
■ S. Fofana, Kessie, Doue
ECUADOR Galindez – Franco (Porozo 62), Ordonez, Pacho, Hincapie; Yeboah (Preciado 62), M. Caicedo, Vite, Minda (Angulo 56); Plata; E. Valencia (Rodriguez 77)
■ Porozo

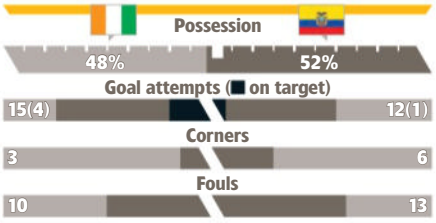
GOALS

1-0 Ivorian defender Wilfried Singo powers up the right flank before crossing to substitute Amad Diallo, who opens up his body and deftly side-foots the ball first-time into the bottom left corner. Extreme grace under pressure.

Leaving it late... Amad Diallo hits the winner

IVORY COAST STRIKE LATE

Ivory Coast, for whom young RB Leipzig winger Yan Diomande offered a masterclass of his many and varied skills, may have left it late to claim the all-important win, but probably did just enough to shade it in this closely-contested encounter – the West African nation's first-ever victory over South American opposition at a World Cup. The Ivorians, the youngest squad at this summer's main event, were the most poised and enterprising in possession and in Diomande had the standout player, a tyro with the ability to work his dribbling magic on either flank. For Ecuador, unbeaten in their previous 19 fixtures, it was just one of those cursed nights of ill-fortune, hitting the woodwork on no fewer than three occasions, twice in the first half through John Yeboah and Alan Minda and again in the second period, when Enner Valencia was thwarted by the goal frame.



SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 9PM

GERMANY (0) 2
(Undav 68, 90+4)

IVORY COAST (1) 1
(Kessie 30)

Toronto Stadium
Att: 43,036 Ref: Juan Gabriel Benitez (Par)

GERMANY Neuer – Kimmich, Tah, Schlotterbeck (Rudiger 46), Brown; Nmecha, Pavlovic (Amiri 60); Sane (Leweling 60), Musiala (Undav 60), Wirtz; Havertz (Goretzka 85)
IVORY COAST Y. Fofana – Singo (Doue 82), Kossounou, Agbadou, Konan; Sangare (S. Fofana 75); Amad (Adingra 75), Kessie, Inao Oulai, Y. Diomande (Pepe 85); Bonny (Guessand 75)

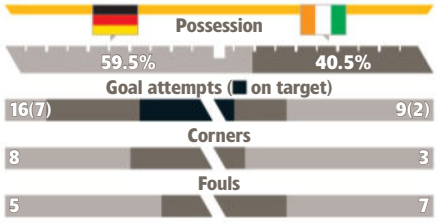
GOALS

0-1 Yan Diomande makes inroads on the left before a fine cross into the six-yard box. After Nathaniel Brown blocks Amad Diallo's initial effort, Franck Kessie forces home the rebound.
1-1 Nadiem Amiri clips a ball into the box, and fellow substitute Deniz Undav volleys in.
2-1 Germany midfielder Felix Nmecha plays an outstanding through ball to Undav, who takes a touch, spins and fires in left-footed.

Supersub... Deniz Undav

UNDAV TO THE RESCUE

Bayern Munich honorary chairman Uli Hoeness recently complained that Germany head coach Julian Nagelsmann was a little too full of himself. "Our *Bundestrainer* thinks that he himself wins games," declared Hoeness. "No, it's the team which does that." So much for that opinion after Nagelsmann sparked this come-from-behind win with the inspirational second-half clutch of substitutions, bringing on supersub Deniz Undav, winger Jamie Leweling and midfield schemer Nadiem Amiri. Up against a brave and resourceful Ivorian side, Germany found the going tough for long periods, but full of resilience and spirit, belatedly found a way to seal safe passage into the knockout stages. For the Ivorians it was a bitter pill to swallow, but their path to the knockouts remained clear.



	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
GERMANY	3	2	0	1	10	4	6
IVORY COAST	3	2	0	1	4	2	6
ECUADOR	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
CURACAO	3	0	1	2	1	9	1

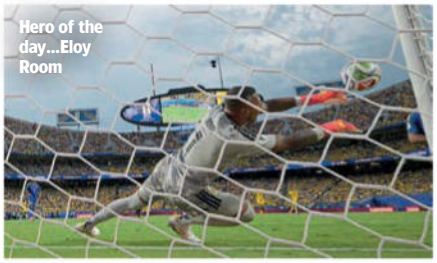
GROUP E

SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 1AM

ECUADOR (0) 0
CURACAO (0) 0

Kansas City Stadium
Att: 68,598 Ref: Ma Ning (Chn)

ECUADOR Galindez – Franco (Preciado 83), Pacho, Hincapie; Alcivar (Rodriguez 46); Yeboah (J. Caicedo 89), Vite, M. Caicedo, Estupinan (Angulo 70); Plata, E. Valencia
■ Alcivar
CURACAO Room – Brenet, Gaari, Obispo, Floranus, Fonville (Van Eijma 76); Chong (Margaritha 76), Comenencia (Roemeratoe 83), L. Bacuna, J. Bacuna (Gorre 75); Locadia (Kastaneer 83)
■ L. Bacuna, J. Bacuna, Comenencia, Gaari, Kastaneer


Hero of the day...Eloy Room

RECORD-BREAKING ROOM

In a group stage laden with surprises, Curacao became the latest of the supposed underlings to strike a blow for the little man, picking up their first-ever World Cup point courtesy of this impressive exercise in steadfast resistance. Hero of the day for the team known as the Blue Wave was their 37-year-old goalkeeper Eloy Room, whose brilliance as a last-gasp lifesaver could be enumerated in his amazing total of 15 saves, a record-breaking tally for shot-stopping over 90 minutes at the World Cup finals. With no fewer than 27 goal attempts and zero end product, Ecuador will be hugely disappointed that they let the win slip through their fingers. Time and time again, they carved out decent opportunities, only to be denied by a combination of Room's state of grace and the profligacy in the red zone of their frontrunners, especially striker Enner Valencia. Blessed with an outstanding defensive unit but lacking attacking incision, this result confirmed all of the Ecuador fans' worst fears about their team's potential shortcomings at the finals. They only scored 14 goals in 18 World Cup qualifiers, and it was the same old blunt-edged story for Sebastian Beccacece's side here.

	Ecuador	Curacao
Possession	75%	25%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	27(15)	10(3)
Corners	9	0
Fouls	7	10

THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 9PM

CURACAO (0) 0
IVORY COAST (1) 2
(Pepe 7, 64)

Philadelphia Stadium
Att: 68,324 Ref: Glenn Nyberg (Swe)

CURACAO Room – Brenet (Sambo 90), Gaari (Kastaneer 77), Obispo, Fonville (Noslin 77), Floranus; Chong, Comenencia (Antonisse 61), L. Bacuna, J. Bacuna; Locadia (Kuwas 90)
■ J. Bacuna, Kastaneer
IVORY COAST Y. Fofana – Doue, Kossounou, O. Diomande, Operi; Sangare, Kessie (Seri 77); Amad (Inao Oulai 46), Pepe (Wahi 67), Y. Diomande (Toure 67); Bonny (Diakite 67)
■ Pepe

GOALS

0-1 Curacao make the mistake of trying to play their way out of trouble and, following an unfortunate ricochet, Yan Diomande provides the cut-back for Nicolas Pepe to convert.
0-2 Ibrahim Sangare sends a beautifully incisive through ball on the right side of the box to Pepe, whose first touch sets himself up to finish left-footed with poise, precision and power.

At the double ...Pepe scores his second

PEPE BRACE SEES ELEPHANTS PROGRESS

Ivory Coast, through to the World Cup knockout stages for the first time, did not have to bust a gut for a victory against a Curacao team who appeared to have spent all of their emotional energy in their first two games of the group. For long spells, *Les Elephants* were happy to take their foot off the gas, and such was the difference in class between the two sides that the West Africans could afford to go through the motions. Only on a few occasions did Curacao threaten, with Tahith Chong always willing to have a dig at goal and Juninho Bacuna firing just wide after a great solo run. Left out of his country's Africa Cup of Nations squad just a few months earlier, Nicolas Pepe's brace justified his return to the team.

	Curacao	Ivory Coast
Possession	37%	63%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	11(2)	7(3)
Corners	4	6
Fouls	11	6

THURSDAY, JUNE 25, 9PM

ECUADOR (1) 2
(Angulo 9, Plata 77)
GERMANY (1) 1
(Sane 2)

New York/New Jersey Stadium
Att: 80,663 Ref: Tori Penso (USA)

ECUADOR Galindez – Franco (Preciado 64), Ordonez, Pacho, Hincapie (Estupinan 71); Yeboah (Torres 85), M. Caicedo, Vite, Angulo (J. Caicedo 85); Plata, E. Valencia (Rodriguez 64)
■ Hincapie, Franco, Plata
GERMANY Neuer – Kimmich (Thiaw 60), Tah, Rudiger, Raum; Nmecha (Beier 64), Pavlovic (Stiller 46); Sane, Musiala, Wirtz (Gross 73); Havertz (Undav 60)
■ Pavlovic

GOALS

0-1 Florian Wirtz tees up Leroy Sane for a crisp side-foot finish. Ecuador unsuccessfully protest that Aleksandar Pavlovic left a high boot on Pedro Vite at the start of the move.
1-1 *La Tri* immediately strike back. A heavy touch from Felix Nmecha triggers a rapid Ecuadorian incision in the inside-left channel, Nilson Angulo lashing into the bottom corner.
2-1 From an Ecuador corner, Kevin Rodriguez glances a header at the near post and Gonzalo Plata, much quicker than hesitant Germany goalkeeper Manuel Neuer, pokes home.

Shock...Gonzalo Plata celebrates scoring the winner

SHOCK WIN TAKES ECUADOR THROUGH

Ecuador head coach Sebastian Beccacece noted in a pre-match press conference that fans of *La Tri* never had taken him to their hearts, especially those who considered him too defensive-minded. But what a stay of execution the Argentine plotted in New Jersey, his valiant, robust side giving absolutely everything for the three points they needed for a place in the knockout phase. An off-day for far too many in the German ranks, not least Manuel Neuer in goal and midfield holders Felix Nmecha and Aleksandar Pavlovic.

	Ecuador	Germany
Possession	39%	61%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	7(3)	11(3)
Corners	3	2
Fouls	15	10

GROUP F

SUNDAY, JUNE 14, 9PM

NETHERLANDS (0) 2
(Van Dijk 51, Summerville 64)

JAPAN (0) 2
(Nakamura 57, Kamada 89)

Dallas Stadium
Att: 69,285 Ref: Ismail Elfath (USA)

NETHERLANDS Verbruggen – Dumfries, Van Hecke, Van Dijk, Van der Ven; Gravenberch (Ake 81), De Jong, Reijnders (Q. Timber 70); Summerville (Koopmeiners 70), Malen (Memphis 70), Gakpo (Brobbey 85)
■ Summerville, Memphis, Van der Ven
JAPAN Z. Suzuki – Watanabe (Tomiyasu 75), Taniguchi, H. Ito; Doan (Sugawara 75), Sano, Kamada, Nakamura; Kubo (Ogawa 75), Maeda (J. Ito 66); Ueda (Shioagi 84)

GOALS

1-0 Ryan Gravenberch's inviting cross from the right finds the head of Virgil van Dijk whose precise effort bounces in off the far post.
1-1 The lively Takefusa Kubo works the ball to wing-back Keito Nakumura, in an unfamiliar central position, who turns and rifles in.
2-1 Gravenberch picks out Crysencio Summerville with a short pass to the right of the box. Summerville glides inside and curls a left-footed shot into the far corner.
2-2 A corner is fiercely headed goalwards by Koki Ogawa and the ball goes in via a deflection off Daichi Kamada's head and the flailing arms of Dutch keeper Bart Verbruggen.

Dramatic finish... Kamada deflects the ball in

SECOND HALF BURSTS INTO LIFE

In the wake of a soporific first half, when both teams were clearly terrified of making a mistake, a substantial injection of drive, initiative and excitement was urgently required. Fortunately, that's what arrived in industrial quantities after the restart with both sides releasing the handbrake. Twice in front, the Dutch will regret not holding on for all three points, but ultimately were unable to resist the Blue Samurai's absolute refusal to accept defeat.

	Netherlands	Japan
Possession	60%	40%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	10(6)	10(3)
Corners	5	4
Fouls	7	7

MONDAY, JUNE 15, 3AM

SWEDEN (2) 5
(Ayari 7, 90+6, Isak 30, Gyokeres 59, Svanberg 84)

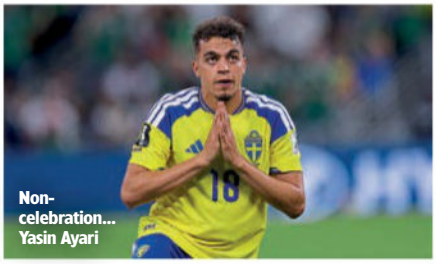
TUNISIA (1) 1
(Rekik 43)

Estadio Monterrey
Att: 50,987 Ref: Yael Falcon (Arg)

SWEDEN Nordfeldt – Lagerbielke, Hien, Lindelof; Karlstrom (Svanberg 84); Bernhardsson (Svensson 90+1), Nygren (Bergvall 65), Ayari, Gudmundsson (Stroud 65); Gyokeres, Isak (Elanga 90)
TUNISIA Chamakh – Valery (Hadj Mahmoud 72), Rekik, Talbi, Ben Hmida, Abdi; Khedira (Gharbi 83), Skhiri (Achouri 72), Hannibal; Saad (Tounekti 72), Ben Slimane (Chaouat 84)
■ Khedira

GOALS

1-0 Victor Lindelof's long ball forward isn't properly dealt with and eventually falls to Yasin Ayari who smashes in from the edge of the area.
2-0 Leading the counter-attack, Alexander Isak gallops down the left wing before cutting in and drilling a shot into the far corner.
2-1 Hannibal Mejbri whips in a great ball from the right and Omar Rekik flicks in a header.
3-1 Isak picks the pocket of Ellyes Shkiri and passes to Viktor Gyokeres who finishes.
4-1 Substitute Matias Svanberg, played onside by the slightest of touches from Isak, sweeps home a free-kick crossed in from the right.
5-1 Ayari conjures up another long-range special, this time firing in from the right side.


Non-celebration... Yasin Ayari

SWEDES SEND LAMOUCHI PACKING

Sweden midfielder Yasin Ayari, whose father is Tunisian, netted a memorable brace of highlight reel stunners as Graham Potter's side took full advantage of the North Africans' almost comical attempts to operate with any sort defensive care and rigour. With the Tunisians seemingly intent on self-sabotage, the Swedes only had to take their chances, which they did with ruthless efficiency – and Tunisia responded by firing head coach Sabri Lamouchi.

	Sweden	Tunisia
Possession	49%	51%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	13(7)	6(2)
Corners	4	2
Fouls	10	8

SATURDAY, JUNE 20, 6PM

NETHERLANDS (2) 5
(Brobbey 5, 17, Gakpo 47, 54, Summerville 89)

SWEDEN (0) 1
(Elanga 59)

Houston Stadium
Att: 68,777 Ref: Michael Oliver (Eng)

NETHERLANDS Verbruggen – Dumfries, Van Hecke, Van Dijk, Van der Ven; Gravenberch, De Jong (Koopmeiners 59), Reijnders (Til 59); Malen (Summerville 46), Brobbey (Memphis 72), Gakpo (Lang 90)
SWEDEN Nordfeldt – Lagerbielke, Hien, Lindelof; Karlstrom (Zeneli 56); Bernhardsson (Elanga 55), Nygren (Bergvall 56), Ayari (Ali 79), Gudmundsson (Stroud 90+3); Gyokeres, Isak
■ Gudmundsson, Ayari, Bergvall

GOALS

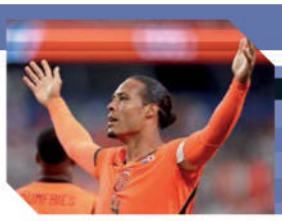
1-0 Brian Brobbey lays off a long ball to Tijjani Reijnders, who releases Cody Gakpo on the left, and his devilish cross is converted by Brobbey.
2-0 Brobbey stretches to get a touch to Denzel Dumfries' excellent delivery from the right.
3-0 Crysencio Summerville releases Dumfries, whose low cross is met at the far post by Gakpo.
4-0 Summerville leads a pacy Dutch counter-attack and sets up Gakpo to pick his spot.
4-1 Sweden substitute Anthony Elanga latches onto a cute Alexander Isak through ball and produces a top-drawer finish.
5-1 Substitute Summerville grabs his second goal of the tournament, dropping his shoulder before placing the ball into the net.

Two each ...Brian Brobbey and Cody Gakpo

DUTCH FRONT TWO OUTSHINES SWEDEN'S

Graham Potter's magic carpet ride as Sweden coach came crashing to earth with this painful humiliation at the hands of a rampant *Oranje*, who overwhelmed the hapless Scandinavians. The Dutch superiority was there for all to see: physically stronger, slicker in their approach play and far more direct. Sweden's expensive frontline pairing of Alexander Isak and Viktor Gyokeres did not threaten nearly enough.

	Netherlands	Sweden
Possession	51%	49%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	10(7)	16(8)
Corners	2	5
Fouls	9	12



GROUP F

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
NETHERLANDS	3	2	1	0	10	4	7
JAPAN	3	1	2	0	7	3	5
SWEDEN	3	1	1	1	7	7	4
TUNISIA	3	0	0	3	2	12	0

SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 5AM

TUNISIA (0) 0

JAPAN (2) 4
(Kamada 4, Ueda 31, 83, J. Ito 69)

Estadio Monterrey
Att: 51,243 Ref: Istvan Kovacs (Rou)

TUNISIA Dahmen – Bronn (Ben Hmida 46), Talbi, Rekik; Valery, Ben Slimane, Skhiri (Khedira 90+1), Abdi (Achouri 90+1); Saad (Gharbi 46), Hannibal; Tounekti (Chaouat 64)
JAPAN Z. Suzuki – Tomiyasu (Seko 79), Itakura, H. Ito; Doan (Sugawara 74), Sano, Tanaka, Nakamura (Y. Suzuki 79); J. Ito, Kamada (J. Suzuki 73); Ueda (Goto 84)

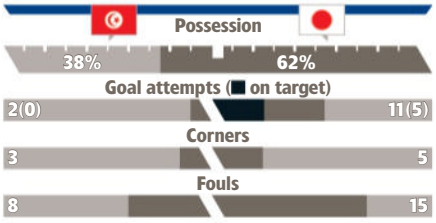
GOALS

0-1 Japan move the ball sweetly from right to left. Keito Nakamura gets into box, hits the by-line and fires in a cross that Daichi Kamada gratefully steers home with his heel.
0-2 Samurai Blue striker Ayase Ueda lets fly from the right corner of the box and his fizzing low shot passes through Montassar Talbi's legs en route to the back of the net.
0-3 Coming deep to receive the ball, Ueda plays it over the Tunisian defence with a clever flick around the corner. Junya Ito runs on to it and calmly slips the ball under Tunisia's keeper.
0-4 Kaishu Sano crosses to the far post, where Ueda, leaping like salmon, does tremendously well to arc a slow-motion header into the goal.

At the double ...Ayase Ueda

TUNISIA'S MANAGER GAMBLE BACKFIRES

The Tunisian federation's knee-jerk reaction to their 5-1 hammering by Sweden in their World Cup opener – sacking Sabri Lamouchi and replacing him with much-travelled fellow Frenchman Herve Renard – made next to no difference as the Eagles of Carthage fell to yet another heavy defeat. Their World Cup elimination sealed, the Tunisians did not even register a shot on target against the Japanese, whose passing and movement was first class, as was their energy and drive.



FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 12AM

JAPAN (0) 1
(Maeda 56)

SWEDEN (0) 1
(Elanga 62)

Dallas Stadium
Att: 70,137 Ref: Ivan Barton (Slv)

JAPAN Z. Suzuki – Seko (Watanabe 75), Itakura (Taniguchi 39), H. Ito; Sugawara, Tanaka, Kamada, Nakamura (Nagatomo 75); Doan (J. Ito 67), Maeda; Ueda (Ogawa 66)
Taniguchi
SWEDEN Widell Zetterstrom – Lagerbielke, Hien (Bergvall 37), Gudmundsson (Nygren 88); Bernhardsson (Svensson 75), Lindelof (Starfelt 87), Ayari, Stroud (Sema 75); Elanga, Gyokeres, Isak
Hien, Gyokeres

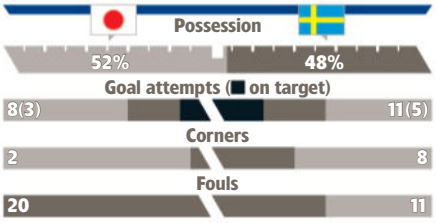
GOALS

1-0 Ritsu Doan plays a sublime one-two with Ayase Ueda before sliding an inch-perfect assist to Daizen Maeda, who, on the stretch, guides the ball past Jacob Widell Zetterstrom in the Sweden goal.
1-1 Anthony Elanga, cutting inside from the right flank, appears about to deliver a cross, only to unleash a magnificent left-foot curler into the far corner. Japan goalie Zion Suzuki saw it too late to properly effect the stop.

Firing Japan into the last 32...Daezen Maeda

POINT APIECE SENDS BOTH THROUGH

With a draw enough to send both teams through to the knockout phase, a dull first 45 minutes could easily have been construed as a convenient truce. But the game came to life on the restart, with two tremendous goals, each designed and executed to the highest specifications. Sweden twice came close to winning at the death, Alexander Isak and the electric Anthony Elanga both forcing good saves from Zion Suzuki. But overall, the draw was a fair result, the point accrued sending both teams through to the last 32 – Japan as group runners-up and Sweden as one of the best third-placed teams.



FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 12AM

TUNISIA (0) 1
(Mastouri 54)

NETHERLANDS (2) 3
(Skhiri 3 og, Brobbey 7, Van Hecke 62)

Kansas City Stadium
Att: 68,391 Ref: Katia Garcia (Mex)

TUNISIA Dahmen – Valery, Talbi, Skhiri, Ben Hmida (Ben Ouanes 68), Abdi; Ben Slimane (Achouri 68), Gharbi (Chaouat 75), Khedira (Hadj Mahmoud 67), Hannibal; Mastouri (Tounekti 90)
NETHERLANDS Verbruggen – Dumfries, Van Hecke, Van Dijk, Ake; Gravenberch, De Jong (Koopmeiners 72), Reijnders (Kluivert 72); Malen (Summerville 72), Brobbey (Memphis 77), Gakpo (Lang 84)

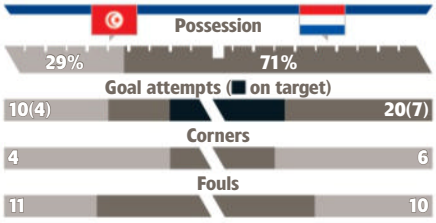
GOALS

0-1 Tunisia suffer the early setback they dreaded, captain Ellyes Skhiri slicing Denzel Dumfries' low cross past his own goalkeeper.
0-2 A Tijjani Reijnders free-kick sparks more dysfunction in the Tunisian backline. Skipper Virgil van Dijk heads across goal to give Brian Brobbey a simple tap-in.
1-2 The Dutch take their turn to show frailty in defence, allowing Hazem Mastouri a free header from Hannibal Mejbri's corner. Reijnders ball-watches while Mastouri gratefully picks his spot.
1-3 *Oranje* defender Jan Paul van Hecke rises to meet a Reijnders corner at the near post, guiding the ball home via a deflection off leaping Tunisian midfielder Anis Ben Slimane.

Swept aside... Nathan Ake holds off Yan Valery

SORRY TUNISIA GO OUT WITH A WHIMPER

Always in control against an incohesive, disintegrating Tunisian XI – pointless, hapless and such a disappointment to their supporters – the Dutch had no problem whatsoever in securing top spot in Group F, never needing to shift above second gear. The gulf in class here was palpable. Ronald Koeman's Class of 2026 may not be the most flamboyant of *Oranje* line-ups, but there is understated effectiveness about them, fine-tuned in their organisation, technically-gifted and well-balanced.



GROUP G

MONDAY, JUNE 15, 8PM

BELGIUM (0) 1
(Hany 66 og)

EGYPT (1) 1
(Ashour 20)

Seattle Stadium
Att: 66,775 Ref: Ramon Abatti (Bra)

BELGIUM Courtois – Meunier, Ngoy, Mechele, Castagne (De Cuyper 56); Onana (Raskin 56), Tielemans; Trossard, De Bruyne (Vanaken 86), Doku (Fernandez-Pardo 86); De Ketelaere (Lukaku 66)
■ Castagne, De Cuyper
EGYPT Shobeir – Hany, Ibrahim, Fathy (Adel 88), Fatouh (Hafez 88); Attia, Lashin; Zico (Zizo 76), Salah (Abdelkarim 76), Ashour (Rabia 71); Marmoush
■ Attia, Fatouh

GOALS

0-1 On the end of Mo Salah's through ball, Emam Ashour sets himself with one touch near the D, then unleashes a viciously-struck low drive into the bottom corner.

1-1 Within seconds of coming on, powerhouse striker Romelu Lukaku has Egypt's defence in panic mode, causing Yasser Ibrahim to divert a Thomas Meunier cross into the the net off his team-mate Mohamed Hany.

Instant impact...Lukaku helped bundle the ball in

LUKAKU LEAVES HIS MARK

A penny for the thoughts of all the Belgian pundits who claimed national team record goalscorer Romelu Lukaku was a wasted squad pick after injury restricted him to only 40 minutes of Serie A action for Napoli last season. Introduced as a second-half substitute, the big man instantly brought his immense physical presence to bear, beefily creating the mayhem for the Egypt own goal, the leveller the Red Devils had been chasing for a good three-quarters of an hour. Hard lines on the Egyptians, for whom the wait for a World Cup finals win went on. They performed with no little intelligence here, particularly in the way they largely shut down the threat of Belgian wingers Jeremy Doku and Leandro Trossard.

	Belgium	Egypt
Possession	54%	46%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	15(3)	14(3)
Corners	2	7
Fouls	15	15

TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 2AM

IRAN (1) 2
(Rezaeian 32, Mohebbi 64)

NEW ZEALAND (1) 2
(Just 7, 54)

Los Angeles Stadium
Att: 70,108 Ref: Cesar Arturo Ramos (Mex)

IRAN Beiranvand – Rezaeian, Khalilzadeh, Nemati, Mohammadi; Mohebbi, Ghoddos (Hajisafi 65), Ezatolahi, Yousefi (Ghayedi 46); Moghanloo (Alipour 53), Taremi (Hosseinzadeh 80)
■ Hajisafi
NEW ZEALAND Crocombe – Payne (Elliot 77), Surman, Boxall, Cacace (Old 68); Bell, Stamenic (Bindon 90+2); McCowatt (Thomas 68), Singh (Randall 90+2), Just; Wood

GOALS

0-1 NZ talisman Chris Wood initiates a move with some outstanding hold-up play and swiftly gets in on the act again, chesting the ball into the path of Elijah Just, the assassin-in-waiting.

1-1 Following a penalty-area scramble in the NZ box, the loose ball falls to attacking Iran full-back Ramin Rezaeian, who uses the outside of his boot to flick the ball home.

1-2 With Wood and Just much to the fore, New Zealand rip the Iranian rear guard apart with some intricate combinations. Wood plays in Just, whose finish is composed and subtle.

2-2 Saman Ghoddos releases Rezaeian on the right with a superb cross-field ball. The latter's cross is perfect, just inviting Mohammad Mohebbi to power in the headed equaliser.

Composed finish ...Elijah Just

JUST RESULT FOR NEW ZEALAND

In a match that entertained throughout, parity on the scoreboard was the logical outcome. At a time when rugby union in New Zealand – an obsession in these parts – is at a low ebb, the likes of Chris Wood, Elijah Just and company did the country proud. Treated with ill-concealed contempt by the US authorities, Iran gave a good account of themselves too, slick and full of urgency when going forward.

	Iran	New Zealand
Possession	48.5%	51.5%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	17(4)	14(8)
Corners	4	1
Fouls	10	8

SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 8PM

BELGIUM (0) 0

IRAN (0) 0

Los Angeles Stadium
Att: 70,317 Ref: Dario Herrera (Arg)

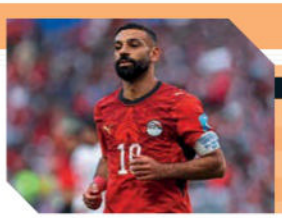
BELGIUM Courtois – Meunier (Castagne 58), Ngoy, Mechele, De Cuyper; Raskin (Vanaken 58), Tielemans; Saelemaekers (Lukebakio 58), De Bruyne (Fernandez-Pardo 87), Trossard; Lukaku (Theate 73)
■ Lukaku ■ Ngoy
IRAN Beiranvand – Hardani (Jahanbakhsh 46), Kanani, Khalilzadeh, Nemati, Hajisafi (Mohammadi 66); Rezaeian, Ghoddos (Moghanloo 79), Ezatolahi, (Hosseinzadeh 85) Mohebbi (Torabi 66); Taremi
■ Ezatolahi

Clean sheet ...Alireza Beiranvand

KEEPERS TO THE FORE IN STALEMATE

A goalless draw was somewhat inevitable in LA given the outstanding form of the two goalkeepers at either end of the pitch: Belgium's highly experienced Thibaut Courtois and his Iranian counterpart, Alireza Beiranvand, who might not have Courtois' global profile but certainly knows how to make his mark. The 33-year-old Beiranvand – who saved a penalty from Cristiano Ronaldo at the 2018 World Cup – looked a class act in every way here against Belgium and will forever be remembered for the miraculous save he pulled off from a prone position to deny Red Devils full-back Maxim De Cuyper, sensationally blocking a seemingly certain goal with a strong outstretched hand. Belgium went down to ten men 20 minutes from time when central defender Nathan Ngoy clumsily gave the ball away inside his own half and responded by tugging back Mehdi Taremi as the Iranian striker set off for goal. It was one of several concerning moments for Rudi Garcia, who had the nation's press corps on his back after Belgium's display, which demonstrated a lack of structure, chronic inconsistency and shortcomings in the finishing department.

	Belgium	Iran
Possession	70%	30%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	23(7)	7(3)
Corners	4	2
Fouls	7	9



	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
BELGIUM	3	1	2	0	6	2	5
EGYPT	3	1	2	0	5	3	5
IRAN	3	0	3	0	3	3	3
NEW ZEALAND	3	0	1	2	4	10	1

GROUP G

MONDAY, JUNE 22, 2AM

NEW ZEALAND (1) 1
(Surman 15)

EGYPT (0) 3
(Zico 58, Salah 67, Trezeguet 82)

BC Place Vancouver
Att: 52,497 Ref: Omar Al Ali (UAE)

NEW ZEALAND Crocombe – Payne (Bindon 85), Surman, Boxall, Cacace (Randall 76); Bell, Stamenic; McCowatt (Old 66), Singh (Thomas 76), Just (De Vries 85); Wood
■ Singh, McCowatt
EGYPT Shobeir – Hany, Ibrahim, Fathy (Rabia 41), Fatouh; Attia, Lashin; Zico (Abdelkarim 76), Salah (Abdelmaguid 84, Abdelmoneim 90+9), Ashour (Zizo 85); Marmoush (Trezeguet 76)
■ Lahsin

GOALS
1-0 Egypt, apparently unaware of NZ's ability from set-pieces, leave centre-back Finn Surman unmarked to head home Tim Payne's corner.
1-1 Egypt right-back Mohamed Hany curls a delightful ball into the mixer and the undetected Mostafa Zico heads powerfully past New Zealand keeper Max Crocombe.
1-2 While the New Zealanders unsuccessfully protest about a foul on midfielder Ben Old, Egypt break with purpose. Mo Salah side-foots home following a slick one-two with Zico.
1-3 Substitute Trezeguet heads in at the near post from a Salah corner to round off the win.

Goalscorers... Mostafa Zico and Mo Salah

PHARAOHS BREAK WORLD CUP DUCK
Little wonder Egyptian celebrations were so joyous at the end of this intense encounter in British Columbia. Now competing in their fourth World Cup (previously appearing in 1934, 1990 and 2018) the Pharaohs finally had a World Cup win. Three Egyptian goals in the space of 24 second-half minutes were sufficient to turn the game on its head and the North Africans more than deserved their moment of glory, forcing their opponents to chase shadows for almost the entirety of the second half.

	NEW ZEALAND	EGYPT
Possession	44%	56%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	11(5)	19(7)
Corners	4	4
Fouls	14	8

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 4AM

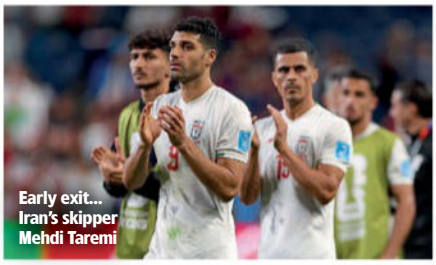
EGYPT (1) 1
(Saber 5)

IRAN (1) 1
(Rezaeian 14)

Seattle Stadium
Att: 66,925 Ref: Szymon Marciniak (Pol)

EGYPT Shobeir – Hany, Rabia, Abdelmoneim (Ibrahim 14), Fatouh; Lashin, Saber (Attia 46); Ashour (Marmoush 46), Salah (Zizo 57), Trezeguet; Zico (Abdelkarim 76)
■ Saber, Ibrahim, Lashin
IRAN Beiranvand – Rezaeian, Kanani (Hardani 46), Khalilzadeh, Nemati, Mohammadi; Ghoddos (Moghanloo 67), Ghorbani, Ezatolahi, Mohebbi (Jahanbakhsh 90+1); Taremi
■ Kanani, Nemati, Ezatolahi, Khalilzadeh

GOALS
1-0 Mohamed Salah's left-footed effort takes a deflection, forcing Iranian goalkeeper Alireza Beiranvand to palm out the ball at full stretch to Mahmoud Saber, whose successful shot for goal takes an unconventional route through the goalie's legs and off a defender on the line.
1-1 Iran work the ball intelligently on the left wing and into the Egyptian box. Cutting inside, Milad Mohammadi goes for the angled stinger, which Pharaohs custodian Mostafa Shobeir does excellently to divert. Ramin Rezaeian gobbles up the rebound from a tight angle.


Early exit... Iran's skipper Mehdi Taremi

IRAN MADE TO PAY FOR MISSED CHANCES
Iran, unbeaten in their three outings at this World Cup, eventually suffered the heartache of not finishing among the best third-placed sides. But it could have been another story if their talismanic striker Mehdi Taremi had not missed a first-half penalty. The hand of the footballing gods turned against them late in the game, when Shoja Khalilzadeh had a goal controversially ruled out for offside and Saeid Ezatolahi flashed a header against the Egyptian crossbar. Egypt, eventually to finish second in the group, certainly were hanging on.

	EGYPT	IRAN
Possession	61%	39%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	15(3)	13(4)
Corners	8	2
Fouls	11	16

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 4AM

NEW ZEALAND (0) 1
(Just 84)

BELGIUM (1) 5
(Trossard 28, 50, De Bruyne 66, Lukaku 86, Saelemaekers 90+4)

BC Place Vancouver
Att: 52,497 Ref: Adham Makhadmeh (Jor)

NEW ZEALAND Crocombe – Payne (Boxall 64), Surman, Bindon, Cacace (De Vries 79); Bell (McCowatt 64), Stamenic; Singh (Old 46), Thomas (Randall 46), Just; Wood
■ Stamenic, Just
BELGIUM Courtois – Castagne, Mechele, Theate, De Cuyper; Tielemans (Raskin 85), Vanaken; Doku (Fernandez-Pardo 56) De Bruyne (Onana 72), Trossard (Saelemaekers 72); De Ketelaere (Lukaku 85)

GOALS
0-1 A Kevin De Bruyne corner is not dealt with by New Zealand's defence and Leandro Trossard pokes the ball home.
0-2 De Bruyne picks out Trossard in the box and after his first swing on goal is blocked, he chest controls the rebound and volleys in.
0-3 A loose ball runs to De Bruyne on the edge of the box and he thumps it into the corner.
1-3 A poor punch from Thibaut Courtois is lashed in by All Whites winger Elijah Just.
1-4 Belgium's subs combine, Nicolas Raskin crossing for a Romelu Lukaku bullet header.
1-5 The *Diables Rouges* break and Lukaku, driving into the penalty box, sets up Alexis Saelemaekers to finish inside the near post.

Group winners... Belgium's Leandro Trossard

RED DEVILS HAMMER ALL WHITES
In a ridiculously one-sided game, Belgium – who clocked up more than 30 shots on the New Zealand goal – finally began to show the class they undoubtedly possess, playing with abundant verve and urgency against an albeit underwhelming opponent. Through to the knockout round as group winners, the *Diables Rouges* will have felt they answered their many virulent critics back home.

	NEW ZEALAND	BELGIUM
Possession	45.5%	54.5%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	6(2)	35(10)
Corners	5	8
Fouls	10	7

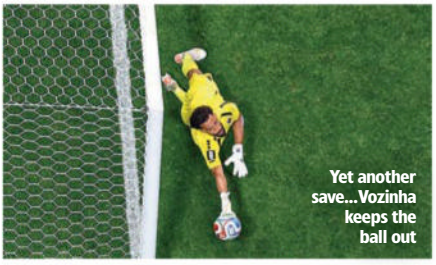
GROUP H

MONDAY, JUNE 15, 5PM

SPAIN (0) 0
CAPE VERDE (0) 0

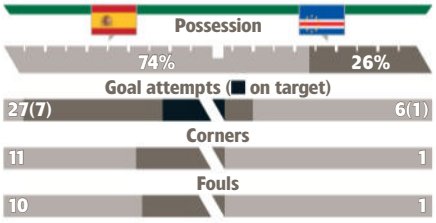
Atlanta Stadium
Att: 67,640 Ref: Adham Makhadmeh (Jor)

SPAIN Simon – Llorente, Cubarsi, Laporte, Cucurella; Fabian (Merino 71), Rodri (Williams 87), Pedri; Ferran (Olmo 81), Oyarzabal, Gavi (Yamal 71)
■ Pedri
CAPE VERDE Vozinha – Moreira, Pico Lopes, Diney Borges, S. Cabral (Joao Paulo 76); K. Pina; Mendes, L. Duarte (D. Duarte 61), Monteiro (Arcanjo 79), J. Cabral (W. Semedo 61); Livramento (Da Costa 61)
■ S. Cabral


Yet another save...Vozinha keeps the ball out

VOZINHA THE HERO IN HISTORIC DRAW

Goalless draws tend not to be thrillers, but how else to describe this most incredible of results, the day little Cape Verde, the third-smallest nation ever to play at a World Cup, marked their debut on the big international stage by keeping the mighty Spain at bay for 90-plus surreal minutes. The Spaniards, reigning European champions and one of the favourites to clinch the global spoils this summer, were universally expected to have the team known as the Blue Sharks for lunch, only for the World Cup rookies from an archipelago off the west coast of Africa to gloriously bite back. Spain tried every trick in the book to break the deadlock, including the deployment of superstar substitute Lamine Yamal. Yet no matter what they tried, they simply could not find a way through, continually frustrated by the underdogs' double line of defensive fortifications, their bend-but-do-not-break commitment and discipline, and the heroics of the 40-year-old goalkeeper Vozinha. And the minnows might even have taken all thee points when centre-back Diney Borges was presented with a free header at the death, but his effort was straight down the throat of Spain keeper Unai Simon.



MONDAY, JUNE 15, 11PM

SAUDI ARABIA (1) 1
(Al Amri 41)
URUGUAY (0) 1
(M. Araujo 80)

Miami Stadium
Att: 62,764 Ref: Maurizio Mariani (Ita)

SAUDI ARABIA Al Owais – Abdulhamid (Lajami 90+3), Al Amri, Al Tambakti, Al Harbi (Al Hamddan 90+3); Abu Al Shamat (Buwashal 81), Kanno, Al Khaibari, S. Al Dawsari; Al Brikan (Al Hejji 90+3), Al Juwayr (N. Al Dawsari 63)
■ Al Amri
URUGUAY Muslera – Varela, Caceres, Olivera, Vina (Sanabria 46); Valverde, Ugarte (De la Cruz 72), Bentancur, M. Araujo (Rodriguez 81); Vinas (Aguirre 90), Nunez (Canobbio 46)

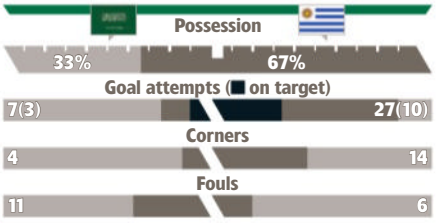
GOALS

1-0 Musab Al Juwayr swings in a corner which, not for the first time, has the Uruguyans at sixes and sevens. Keeper Fernando Muslera clumsily spills Mohamed Kanno's header, leaving Abdulelah Al Amri to pick up the pieces.
1-1 Mathias Olivera crosses from the left to Federico Vinas, whose downward header is pushed out by Saudi keeper Mohammed Al Owais. The rebound falls to Maxi Araujo, who side-foots the bouncing ball home.

Saviour...Maxi Araujo equalises for Uruguay

VALVERDE SWITCH HELPS SNATCH A POINT

Trailing at the break, Uruguay looked anything but convincing in the first half, exceedingly shaky at the back and far too patient and laboured in attack. But how they upped their game in the second period, totally dominant in all spheres, piling on the pressure – ending with 27 shots on goal – and finally rewarded for their efforts with a late equaliser. Key to their awakening was the half-time decision to move Real Madrid's Fede Valverde into the centre of midfield. Full marks to the Saudis for their excellent defensive organisation and the shot-stopping abilities of their impressive goalkeeper Mohammed Al Owais.



SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 5PM

SPAIN (3) 4
(Yamal 11, Oyarzabal 21, 24, Al Tambakti 49 og)
SAUDI ARABIA (0) 0

Atlanta Stadium
Att: 68, 239 Ref: Raphael Claus (Bra)

SPAIN Simon – Porro, Cubarsi, Laporte, Cucurella; Olmo (Merino 61), Rodri, Pedri (Fabian 70); Yamal (Yeremy 46), Oyarzabal (Ferran 46), Baena (Williams 61)
SAUDI ARABIA Al Owais – Abdulhamid, Al Amri (Al Hejji 60), Lajami, Al Tambakti, Al Harbi; Al Juwayr (Al Hamddan 46), Al Khaibari (Kanno 46), N. Al Dawsari (Al Ghannam 90), S. Al Dawsari; Al Brikan (Abu Al Shamat 60)
■ S. Al Dawsari, Kanno

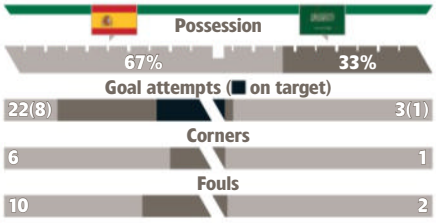
GOALS

1-0 Mikel Oyarzabal sends in a peach of a low cross from the left for Lamine Yamal to pop up at the back post and slide in.
2-0 Dani Olmo miscues a shot from a corner. After a spot of pinball, Oyarzabal nips in to flick the ball home with the outside of his left foot.
3-0 A Pedro Porro cross is relayed aerially by the foot of Marc Cucurella and Olmo's head. Before the ball lands, Oyarzabal converts.
4-0 Cucurella meets a corner at the far post with a well-struck volley. Mohammed Al Owais blocks, only for the ball to ricochet in off Saudi defender Hassan Al Tambakti.

Two-goal hero...Mikel Oyarzabal

SAUDIS SWEPT ASIDE BY SPAIN

In the wake of their sleepy offerings in the shock draw with Cape Verde in the opening game of the group, Spain desperately needed to rediscover their mojo and in an excellent first-half showing did just that, much more forceful with their high-pressing game, far more imaginative going forward and always keen to keep the ball alive. Equally reassuring for *La Roja* was Lamine Yamal's noteworthy contribution, including a goal in his first start since suffering a hamstring injury in April.



GROUP H

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
SPAIN	3	2	1	0	5	0	7
CAPE VERDE	3	0	3	0	2	2	3
URUGUAY	3	0	2	1	3	4	2
SAUDI ARABIA	3	0	2	1	1	5	2

SUNDAY, JUNE 21, 11PM

URUGUAY (2) 2
(M. Araujo 44, Canobbio 45+6)

CAPE VERDE (1) 2
(K. Pina 21, Varela 61)

Miami Stadium
Att: 64,003 Ref: Espen Eskas (Nor)

URUGUAY Muslera – Varela, Caceres, Olivera, Sanabria; Ugarte (De la Cruz 70); Canobbio, Bentancur, Valverde, M. Araujo (Rodriguez 81); Vinas (Nunez 70)
■ Bentancur, Olivera
CAPE VERDE Vozinha – Moreira, Pico Lopes, Diney Borges, S. Cabral; K. Pina (L. Duarte 71); Mendes, Arcanjo (D. Duarte 46), Monteiro (Y. Semedo 80), Rodrigues (Varela 58); Benchimol (Da Costa 58)
■ S. Cabral, Diney Borges

GOALS

0-1 Kevin Pina blasts a fiercely-struck long-range free-kick low past Fernando Muslera in the Uruguay goal, aided in no small part by a disintegrating two-man wall.
1-1 Cape Verde full-back Sidny Cabral heads against his own upright and Maxi Araujo dives to head home his second goal of the tournament.
2-1 Manuel Ugarte chips into the box. Araujo's clever cushioned header is turned in by the exultant Agustin Canobbio.
2-2 Uruguay's defence implodes as Mathias Olivera plays a loose pass inside and keeper Muslera is caught in no-man's land. Helio Varela nips in and guides the ball into an empty net.

Keeper error... Varela nods past Muslera

MUSLERA ERROR COSTS URUGUAY

Although not as defensively sound as they were in their history-defining goalless draw with Spain on Matchday 1, Cape Verde once again proved they can never be counted out, clearly in their element when going toe-to-toe with big-name teams. Often posing a threat on the counter-attack, they played with much enthusiasm and fully merited their point. Uruguay, haphazard in most phases of the game, were left scratching their heads.

	Uruguay	Cape Verde
Possession	65%	35%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	17(2)	12(4)
Corners	11	4
Fouls	11	4

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 1AM

CAPE VERDE (0) 0

SAUDI ARABIA (0) 0

Houston Stadium
Att: 68,278 Ref: Francois Letexier (Fra)

CAPE VERDE Vozinha – W. Pina (Moreira 90+4), Pico Lopes, Diney Borges, Joao Paulo; K. Pina; Mendes (Rodrigues 71), D. Duarte, Monteiro (L. Duarte 71), W. Semedo (Varela 61); Livramento (Da Costa 61)
■ W. Pina
SAUDI ARABIA Al Owais – Abdulhamid, Al Amri, Al Tambakti (Lajami 33), Buwashal (Al Harbi 82); Mandash (Al Hamddan 65), Al Khaibari (Al Juwayr 46), N. Al Dawsari, S. Al Dawsari (Abu Al Shamat 66); Al Brikan, Kanno
■ Abdulhamid, N. Al Dawsari, Al Brikan

Into the knockouts... Cape Verde celebrate

CAPE VERDE PARTY GOES ON

World Cup rookies Cape Verde sensationally sealed the runners-up spot in Group H with this goalless encounter against a vapid and unproductive Saudi side. Now officially the smallest country ever to make the knockout stages of a World Cup, the Blue Sharks, who eked out against-the-odds draws with Spain and Uruguay in their two previous games, arguably deserved all three points from the Saudi clash, the better organised, the strongest mentally and far more of a threat going forward. All the best chances belonged to the Sharks: midfield enforcer Kevin Pina just off target with a long-range effort, winger Willy Semedo twice going close, substitute Nuno Da Costa losing his cool with an open goal gaping, and Saudi goalkeeper Mohammed Al Owais coming off his line to brilliantly block a goal-bound attempt from schemer Laros Duarte. The pick of the Cape Verde merry band of brothers was ever-adventurous right-back Wagner Pina, a constant source of danger for the Saudi backline and within a whisker of the winning goal at the death.

	Cape Verde	Saudi Arabia
Possession	51%	49%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	15(2)	7(3)
Corners	4	4
Fouls	10	16

SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 1AM

URUGUAY (0) 0

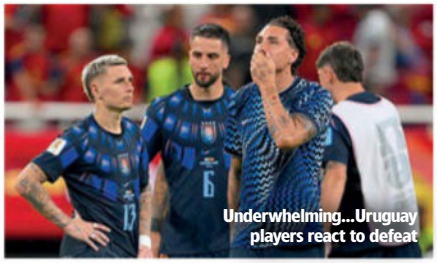
SPAIN (1) 1
(Baena 42)

Estadio Guadalajara
Att: 45,065 Ref: Ismail Elfath (USA)

URUGUAY Muslera (Rochet 46) – Varela, Caceres, Olivera, Sanabria (Rodriguez 70); Ugarte (De la Cruz 45); Canobbio, Bentancur, Valverde (Vinas 57), M. Araujo; Nunez
■ Sanabria, Varela, De la Cruz ■ Canobbio
SPAIN Simon – Llorente, Cubarsi, Laporte, Cucurella; Pedri (Fabian 60), Rodri; Yamal (Ferran 76), Merino (Olmo 60), Baena (Yeremy 66); Oyarzabal (Williams 76)
■ Baena

GOALS

0-1 Marcos Llorente sends a cross from the right into the box, where Alex Baena smartly swivels and unleashes a shot. Uruguay keeper Fernando Muslera makes a complete mess of what should have been a regulation save and the ball goes through his weak hands.


Underwhelming...Uruguay players react to defeat

SPAIN SEND SORRY URUGUAY HOME

Given the World Cup prestige of these two combatants, this was a surprisingly poor match, with both sides offering disjointed performances and relatively little technical and dramatic highlights for spectators to sink their teeth into. Needing a positive result to avoid elimination, Uruguay were as unimpressive as they were in their two previous drawn fixtures in Group H and it says everything that, with so much at stake, they only began to test Spain goalkeeper Unai Simon in the final ten minutes. For such a proud football nation, two successive World Cup group-stage exits are simply not acceptable. As iconic boss Marcelo Bielsa put it: "My tenure here left nothing behind." Spain, through as group winners, were strong and resolute defensively against the Uruguayans, yet often appeared laboured in their build-up play.

	Uruguay	Spain
Possession	33%	67%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	5(1)	6(1)
Corners	1	6
Fouls	14	14

GROUP I

TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 8PM

FRANCE (0) 3
(Mbappe 66, 90+6, Barcola 82)

SENEGAL (0) 1
(Mbaye 90+5)

New York/New Jersey Stadium
Att: 80,545 Ref: Alireza Faghani (Aus)

FRANCE Maignan – Kounde, Upamecano, Saliba, T. Hernandez; Tchouameni, Rabiot; Olise, Dembele (Barcola 80), Doue (Cherki 87); Mbappe
SENEGAL E. Mendy – Diatta, Koulibaly, Niakhate, E. Diouf; Camara (Diarra 75), Gana Gueye (Ciss 88), P. Gueye (I. Ndiaye 83); I. Sarr (Mbaye 75), Jackson (Dieng 83), Mane

GOALS

1-0 Spotting Kylian Mbappe's near-post run, Michael Olise slides in an angled pass for the French skipper to finish in the far corner.
2-0 *Les Bleus* sub Bradley Barcola scampers onto an Adrien Rabiot through ball and dinks the ball over Senegal keeper Edouard Mendy.
2-1 PSG starlet Ibrahim Mbaye gives Senegal a glimmer of hope with an excellent solo strike. Deftness of touch allied to a thumping shot.
3-1 With an immediate reply to Senegal's strike, Mbappe rifles home an unstoppable rising rocket from way out.

Opener... Mbappe fires home

FRANCE TURN IT ON FOR SECOND HALF

France's performance in New Jersey was the classic tale of two diametrically opposed halves: insipid and imprecise in the first half, in total control after the break, pressing much more effectively and ripping the Senegalese apart with the explosive attacking qualities of Kylian Mbappe and Michael Olise, whose move to a more central role for the second period was an inspired piece of management by Didier Deschamps. In the opening 45 minutes, the West Africans gave a fine account of themselves, disciplined defensively, hard to play through and strong on the counter. If only Ismaila Sarr had not spurned a gilt-edged chance on the stroke of half-time.

	France	Senegal
Possession	53%	47%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	11(8)	6(2)
Corners	6	4
Fouls	5	9

TUESDAY, JUNE 16, 11PM

IRAQ (1) 1
(Hussein 39)

NORWAY (2) 4
(Haaland 29, 43, Ostigard 76, Hussein 90+6 og)

Boston Stadium
Att: 63,106 Ref: Pierre Atcho (Gab)

IRAQ Hassan – H. Ali, (Saadoon 73), Tahseen, Hashim, Doski; Bayesh (M. Ali 78), Ismail (Iqbal 59), Al Ammari, Jasim (Qasim 73); Hussein, Al Hamadi (Farji 59)
■ Tahseen
NORWAY Nyland – Ryerson, Ajer, Heggem, Moller Wolfe (Ostigard 73); Odegaard (Berg 81), Berge, Aursnes (Thorstvedt 73); Sorloth (Bobb 73), Haaland, Nusa (Schjelderup 73)

GOALS

0-1 Antonio Nusa plays in the overlapping David Moller Wolfe, whose low cross is forced in at the back stick by the sliding Erling Haaland.
1-1 Iraq striker Aymen Hussein demonstrates his aerial prowess, out-leaping three defenders to power in Amir Al Ammari's cross.
1-2 Iraq keeper Jalal Hassan, intimidated by the onrushing Haaland, clears a lazy back-pass straight off the big man and into his own net.
1-3 Substitute central defender Leo Ostigard jumps highest to glance in a corner, only his second goal for his country.
1-4 Haaland heads back across goal following a cross from the right. Kristian Thorstvedt seems to bundle the ball home, though the official verdict is an own goal by Aymen Hussein.

Overpowered... Haaland bullies Zaid Tahseen

NORWAY'S PERFECT WORLD CUP RETURN

In a lively encounter full of cut-and-thrust excitement, the unfancied Iraqis held their own for long periods. In fact, they often looked the better team – especially in the first half – and were buoyed by the excellent work of twin strikers Aymen Hussein and Ali Al Hamadi, who presented the Norway backline with all manner of problems. Ultimately, the phenomenal Erling Haaland was the difference-maker.

	Iraq	Norway
Possession	39%	61%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	11(1)	12(5)
Corners	2	5
Fouls	12	13

MONDAY, JUNE 22, 10PM

FRANCE (1) 3
(Mbappe 14, 54, Dembele 66)

IRAQ (0) 0

Philadelphia Stadium
Att: 68,324 Ref: Drew Fischer (Can)

FRANCE Maignan – Kounde (Gusto 83), Upamecano, Saliba, Digne; Kone, Rabiot; Dembele (Doue 68), Olise (Cherki 68), Barcola (Akliouche 83); Mbappe (Thuram 90+1)
IRAQ Basil – H. Ali, Tahseen (Sulaka 60), Hashim, Doski; Ismail (Amyn 60), Al Ammari (Sher 68); Qasem, Iqbal, Bayesh (Farji 69); Hussein (Al Hammadi 26)
■ Al Ammari

GOALS

1-0 Michael Olise, as alert as ever in the attacking third, rolls the ball into the path of France skipper Kylian Mbappe, who smashes a left-footed belter into the far corner from the edge of the penalty box.
2-0 An Iraqi comedy of errors. Unable to control a sloppy pass from Zaid Tahseen, Iraq goalkeeper Ahmed Basil coughs up the ball to Ousmane Dembele, who unselfishly lays the ball off for Mbappe to tap in.
3-0 Olise, darting into space, plays in Dembele, who finishes with a thumping shot across the forlorn Basil.

Rain-soaked... Mbappe runs through the Iraq defence

RAIN CAN'T STOP ROUTINE FRENCH WIN

In a game that was delayed for two hours at half-time because of a Philly storm, *Les Bleus* recorded a routine victory to seal qualification for the next round. Winning his 100th cap for France, skipper Kylian Mbappe marked the occasion with his second brace of the tournament. But just as important to Didier Deschamps' side was the return to form of Ousmane Dembele, much criticised in the Gallic media of late for not reproducing the Ballon d'Or-winning form that he displays in Paris Saint-Germain's colours.

	France	Iraq
Possession	56%	44%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	19(5)	4(0)
Corners	4	2
Fouls	8	4

GROUP I

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
FRANCE	3	3	0	0	10	2	9
NORWAY	3	2	0	1	8	7	6
SENEGAL	3	1	0	2	8	6	3
IRAQ	3	0	0	3	1	12	0

TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 1AM

NORWAY (1) 3
(Holmgren Pedersen 43, Haaland 48, 58)

SENEGAL (0) 2
(I. Sarr 53, 90+3)

New York/New Jersey Stadium
Att: 80,663 Ref: Wilton Sampaio (Bra)

NORWAY Nyland – Ryerson (Holmgren Pedersen 13), Ajer, Heggem (Ostigard 84), Moller Wolfe; Odegaard, Berge, Aursnes (Berg 46); Sorloth (Bobb 84), Haaland, Nusa (Schjelderup 72)
SENEGAL E. Mendy (Diaw 63) – Diatta, Koulibaly (P. Sarr 72), Niakhate, E. Diouf (Jakobs 54); Gana Gueye, P. Gueye (Mbaye 54); I. Sarr, Camara (Ciss 63), Mane; Jackson

GOALS

1-0 Senegal centre-back Kalidou Koulibaly fluffs a clearance straight to Norway substitute Marcus Holmgren Pedersen, who duly fires past the hapless keeper Edouard Mendy.
2-0 Martin Odegaard drives forward on the counter and eventually threads the ball to Erling Haaland, whose rasping effort flies into the net.
2-1 Ismaila Sarr latches onto a Sadio Mane flick, holds off the challenge of a Norway defender, and scoops the ball over the keeper.
3-1 Haaland re-adjusts to volley home via the crossbar from Patrick Berg's cross.
3-2 Sarr buries another chance after being cleverly played in by Nicolas Jackson.

Two tens... Odegaard v Mane

VIKINGS BOOK SAFE PASSAGE INTO THE KNOCKOUT ROUND

Only coming alive in the later stages of the game and an accident waiting to happen defensively, Senegal were their own worst enemy, with veteran centre-back Kalidou Koulibaly especially vulnerable. Norway, who secured their place in the knockout phase with this result, fully merited the three points, a triumph built on Erling Haaland's insatiable goal-hunger and the craft and energy of Martin Odegaard, who looked back to his best after struggling for fitness at Arsenal.

	Norway	Senegal
Possession	42%	58%
Goal attempts (on target)	13(7)	16(4)
Corners	5	4
Fouls	13	5

FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 8PM

NORWAY (1) 1
(Aasgaard 21)

FRANCE (3) 4
(Dembele 7, 20, 32, Doue 90+4)

Boston Stadium
Att: 64,146 Ref: Michael Oliver (Eng)

NORWAY Selvik – Aursnes, Falchener (Langas 66), Ostigard, Bjorkan (Holmgren Pedersen 46); Thorstvedt (Thorsby 46), Berg, Aasgaard; Bobb (Nusa 83), Strand Larsen, Schjelderup (Hauge 83)
Berg
FRANCE Maignan – Kounde (Gusto 87), Upamecano (Konate 76), Lacroix, T. Hernandez; Tchouameni, Kone; Dembele (Barcola 65), Olise (Cherki 65), Doue; Mbappe (Mateta 87)
Tchouameni

GOALS

0-1 Ousmane Dembele is released by Kylian Mbappe and cuts inside Norway left-back Fredrik Bjorkan before angling home a powerful shot.
0-2 Dembele strikes again, this time with a wonderful left-footed curler from distance.
1-2 Thelo Aasgaard sells a dummy to Dayot Upamecano and fires low past France goalkeeper Mike Maignan.
1-3 The French ping the ball around midfield before finding Dembele. He feints, shimmies, dummies, then curls in left-footed from the edge of the box.
1-4 Bradley Barcola's fine cross from the left is cushioned into the back of the net by Desire Doue's forehead.

Hat-trick hero ...Ousmane Dembele

FRANCE OUTCLASS NORWAY RESERVES

An almost full-strength France made light work of sealing first place in Group I, seeing off Norway's second string with an exhibition of attacking wizardry. Content to progress as pool runners-up and to rest Erling Haaland, Martin Odegaard and the other default starters, Stale Solbakken's side were a little wasteful on the day, especially when Jorgen Strand Larsen had a second-half penalty saved by Mike Maignan.

	Norway	France
Possession	43%	57%
Goal attempts (on target)	10(4)	18(9)
Corners	4	5
Fouls	9	11

FRIDAY, JUNE 26, 8PM

SENEGAL (1) 5
(Diarra 4, I. Sarr 56, P. Gueye 59, 71, I. Ndiaye 82)

IRAQ (0) 0

Toronto Stadium
Att: 43,036 Ref: Anthony Taylor (Eng)

SENEGAL Diaw – Diatta, Seck (Ciss 58), Niakhate, Jakobs; Diarra (P. Gueye 57), Gana Gueye, Camara (Jackson 57); Mbaye (I. Ndiaye 57), I. Sarr (Diao 81), Mane
P. Gueye, Seck
IRAQ Basil (Hassan 46) – Putros, Sulaka, Hashim, Doski; Iqbal (Yakob 67), Al Ammari; Qasem (Younis 16), Jasim (Maknzi 58), Bayesh; Al Hamadi (Yousif 58)
Al Ammari, Doski Sulaka

GOALS

1-0 Senegal centre-back Abdoulaye Seck heads a corner goalwards, and the ball bounces in via a deflection off an unwitting Habib Diarra.
2-0 Iraq midfielder Zidane Iqbal is caught near his own box and brushed off the ball by Lamine Camara, who hits the byline and squares for Ismaila Sarr to tap in.
3-0 Only just introduced, Pape Gueye slams home an unstoppable left-footed rocket.
4-0 Pape Gueye repeats the dose, busting the net with a venomous shot after Iliman Ndiaye heads the ball back to him.
5-0 Iliman Ndiaye mails his own application for Senegal's goal of the year, finishing a penetrative run with a missile.

Turning point... Rebin Sulaka's red-card foul on Sadio Mane

BIG WIN SENDS SENEGAL THROUGH

This game was effectively over as a contest after 15 minutes, enough time for the Iraqis to go a goal down and have central defender Rebin Sulaka red-carded for the last-man offence of pulling down Sadio Mane. Numerical inferiority eventually took its toll. In the second half, eyeing their chance to boost their goal difference and ensure they'd advance as one of the best third-placed sides, Senegal ran riot.

	Senegal	Iraq
Possession	69%	31%
Goal attempts (on target)	28(12)	6(1)
Corners	12	3
Fouls	10	11

GROUP J

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 2AM

ARGENTINA (1) 3
(Messi 17, 60, 76)
ALGERIA (0) 0

Kansas City Stadium
Att: 69,045 Ref: Szymon Marciniak (Pol)

ARGENTINA E. Martinez – Montiel (Molina 46), Romero (Otamendi 80), Li. Martinez, Medina; De Paul, Mac Allister, Fernandez, Almada (Gonzalez 55); Messi (Paz 80), La. Martinez (Alvarez 55)
ALGERIA Zidane – Belghali, Mandi, Bensebaini, Ait-Nouri; Boudaoui (Aouar 64), Bentaleb (Boulbina 81), Maza (Zerrouki 82); Hadj Moussa (Mahrez 64), Gouiri (Amoura 64), Chaibi

GOALS

1-0 Lionel Messi gets the ball on the turn and strides forward before whipping a shot that Luca Zidane is unable to keep out despite getting both hands to it.
2-0 Zidane saves Alexis Mac Allister's strike from range but allows the ball to bounce away from him. Messi reacts to pass it into the net.
3-0 Messi plays the ball out to substitute Nico Gonzalez and gets it back before bending a beautiful effort into the bottom corner, taking him to 16 World Cup goals – matching Miroslav Klose's all-time record.

Opener... Messi scores his first goal

MESSI STEALS HEADLINES WITH HAT-TRICK

Any doubts as to whether Argentina's captain and talisman could still weave his magic at this level were laughed off immediately. Both Messi and Fares Chaibi had early goals ruled out for offside and continued looking to make their mark. Inevitably, it was Messi who took centre stage on his 200th international appearance by scoring his first World Cup hat-trick, while Chaibi remained busy in the first half and continued to take shots. The opening goal gave Argentina a platform to gain control of proceedings and the 38-year-old could have had an assist too following a pass that resulted in Lautaro Martinez's low shot being saved.

	Argentina	Algeria
Possession	48%	52%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	10(6)	7(0)
Corners	2	2
Fouls	13	8

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 5AM

AUSTRIA (1) 3
(Schmid 20, Al Arab 76 og, Arnautovic 90+12 pen)
JORDAN (0) 1
(Olwan 50)

San Francisco Bay Area Stadium
Att: 68,527 Ref: Dahane Beida (Mtn)

AUSTRIA A. Schlager – Posch, Lienhart, Alaba (Danso 59), Mwene (Wanner 59); Seiwald, X. Schlager (Chukwuemeka 59); Schmid (Wimmer 83), Laimer, Sabitzer; Kalajdzic (Arnautovic 46)
■ Sabitzer
JORDAN Abulaila – Nasib (Al Rosan 81), Al Arab, Abualnadi (Obaid 72); Haddad (Al Mardi 81), Al Rashdan, Al Rawabdeh, Abu Taha; Fakhoury (Azaizeh 89), Olwan; Al Tamari (Al Daoud 88)

GOALS

1-0 Xaver Schlager lays the ball back to Romano Schmid, who takes a touch and curls a divine strike into the top corner.
1-1 Jordan's first-ever goal at the World Cup is a stunner as Ali Olwan glides into the box and guides his shot in off the far post.
2-1 Yazan Al Arab challenges Marko Arnautovic in the air but glances Marcel Sabitzer's corner into his own net.
3-1 Arnautovic's cutback is handled by sub Saleem Obaid and he takes the penalty himself, sending Yazeed Abulaila the wrong way.

Scrap... Konrad Laimer challenges Abdallah Nasib

AUSTRIA OVERCOME SPIRITED DEBUTANTS

Jordan were fearless on their World Cup debut and were particularly threatening on the counter, but ultimately couldn't force a point v Austria. They continued to push forward despite going behind to a spectacular opener, and, having already seen a header hit the crossbar, Ali Olwan produced an equally impressive strike to equalise. Mohannad Abu Taha blocked Carney Chukwuemeka's attempt but it was fellow Austria sub Marko Arnautovic who proved the game-changer. He had a goal ruled out for offside, and his presence led to Jordan's own goal before sealing the points in stoppage time.

	Austria	Jordan
Possession	63%	37%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	11(4)	11(4)
Corners	4	3
Fouls	12	7

MONDAY, JUNE 22, 6PM

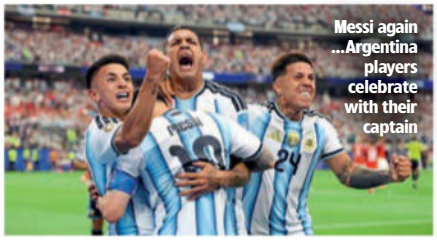
ARGENTINA (1) 2
(Messi 38, 90+5)
AUSTRIA (0) 0

Dallas Stadium
Att: 70,649 Ref: Amin Omar (Egy)

ARGENTINA E. Martinez – Molina, Romero (Otamendi 57), Li. Martinez, Medina (Tagliafico 82); De Paul (Paredes 82), Mac Allister, Fernandez, Almada (Alvarez 64); Messi, La. Martinez (Gonzalez 65)
■ Medina, Paredes
AUSTRIA A. Schlager – Posch (Prass 68), Danso, Alaba (Friedl 67), Laimer; Seiwald, X. Schlager; Schmid (Wimmer 78), Wanner (Arnautovic 68), Sabitzer; Gregoritsch (Chukwuemeka 85)
■ Posch, Laimer

GOALS

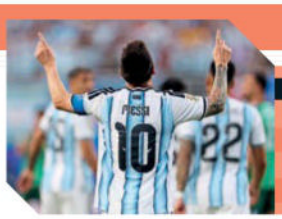
1-0 Thiago Almada steps over Facundo Medina's cutback, allowing Lionel Messi to meet it with a clinical first-time finish and become the World Cup's all-time top scorer.
2-0 Julian Alvarez and Messi both have shots stopped, before the latter reacts to fire the ball through two Austrian defenders.


Messi again ...Argentina players celebrate with their captain

MESSI TAKES CENTRE STAGE AGAIN

Lionel Messi became the World Cup's all-time top scorer with a brace against Austria, but he didn't have it all his own way. In a far from ideal start to proceedings, he sent his penalty wide following a challenge from Stefan Posch and Xaver Schlager on Lautaro Martinez. When Messi did eventually put Argentina ahead, Austria offered little in terms of an attacking response, with their sole shot on target a Marcel Sabitzer free-kick that was comfortably dealt with by Emiliano Martinez. Michael Gregoritsch then sent a header over while Nicolas Gonzalez's header at the other end went wide. Austria's best chance came late on, when Patrick Wimmer nodded wide, but the game was taken out of their reach by Messi's second moments later. He couldn't make it two hat-tricks in a row at this World Cup, however, firing a free-kick wide.

	Argentina	Austria
Possession	54%	46%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	12(5)	6(1)
Corners	1	3
Fouls	13	13



GROUP J

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ARGENTINA	3	3	0	0	8	1	9
AUSTRIA	3	1	1	1	6	6	4
ALGERIA	3	1	1	1	5	7	4
JORDAN	3	0	0	3	3	8	0

TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 4AM

JORDAN (1) 1
(Al Rashdan 36)

ALGERIA (0) 2
(Benbouali 69, Gouiri 82)

San Francisco Bay Area Stadium
Att: 68,371 Ref: Slavko Vincic (Svn)

JORDAN Abulaila – Nasib, Al Arab, Abu Dahab (Obaid 90+1); Haddad, Al Rashdan, Al Rawabdeh, Abu Taha (Abu Hasheesh 85); Olwan (Abu Zraiq 90+2), Al Mardi (Fakhoury 76), Al Tamari (Azaizeh 84)
■ Abu Dahab
ALGERIA Zidane – Belghali, Mandi, Bensebaini, Ait-Nouri (Hadjam 85); Boudaoui (Benbouali 46), Zerrouki (Bentaleb 46); Mahrez (Hadj Moussa 76), Maza, Chaibi; Gouiri (Belaid 86)
■ Zerrouki

GOALS

1-0 Mousa Al Tamari links up with Mohannad Abu Taha and completely messes up his shot, but Nizar Al Rashdan makes no mistake when the ball trickles through to him.
1-1 Nadhir Benbouali rises while surrounded by four red shirts to meet Riyad Mahrez's corner with a header that goes inside the far post.
1-2 Algeria score from another corner. Amine Gouiri reacts to Ramy Bensebaini's deflected header to poke the ball over the line.

Sucker-punch... Gouiri celebrates his late winner

ALGERIA COMEBACK KNOCKS OUT JORDAN

Both nations came into this match looking to rectify opening-day defeats, but it was Algeria who came out on top in an entertaining Arab derby full of passion and commitment. Jordan missed a gilt-edged chance to take the lead in the opening minute when Nizar Al Rashdan headed wide, while Amine Gouiri hit the side netting at the other end just minutes later. After Jordan made the breakthrough, with Al Rashdan sparking jubilant celebrations among their supporters, they put in a valiant defensive effort to try to hold on, but were ultimately undone by two corners and were eliminated from the World Cup with a game to spare.

	Jordan	Algeria
Possession	28%	72%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	8(4)	17(8)
Corners	1	10
Fouls	11	6

SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 3AM

ALGERIA (1) 3
(Belghali 45, Mahrez 60, 90+3)

AUSTRIA (1) 3
(Arnautovic 28, Sabitzer 55, Kalajdzic 90+6)

Kansas City Stadium
Att: 69,045 Ref: Ilgiz Tantashev (Uzb)

ALGERIA Benbot – Belghali (Chergui 71), Mandi, Bensebaini, Hadjam (Ait-Nouri 71); Chaibi, Bentaleb; Mahrez, Maza, Aouar (Ghedjemis 90+4); Gouiri (Belaid 71)
AUSTRIA A. Schlager – Posch, Lienhart, Alaba (Danso 62), Mwene (Kalajdzic 90+5); Seiwald, X. Schlager (Grillitsch 46); Laimer, Schmid (Wanner 46), Sabitzer; Arnautovic (Gregoritsch 46)
■ Arnautovic

GOALS

0-1 David Alaba clips a ball behind Algeria's defence that Marko Arnautovic latches onto and pokes past Oussama Benbot.
1-1 Ramy Bensebaini's ball stays in via the corner flag, and Rafik Belghali gets hold of it, finds some space with quick feet and smashes a shot past Alexander Schlager.
1-2 Konrad Laimer plays a pinpoint pass to Marcel Sabitzer, with the on-rushing midfielder finishing with a clinical first-time finish.
2-2 Houssem Aouar breezes past Stefan Posch and cuts the ball back for Algeria captain Riyad Mahrez to equalise.
3-2 Fares Chaibi does well to find Aouar, who slips the ball through for Mahrez to dramatically hit his shot inside the far post.
3-3 Michael Gregoritsch heads a deep cross back across goal for Sasa Kalajdzic to head in.

Chaotic ...players compete for the ball

END-TO-END THRILLER ENDS ALL SQUARE

These teams meeting at a World Cup threw up memories of the "Disgrace of Gijon" in 1982, but there could be no comparison to Austria's drab encounter with West Germany back then. This match was filled with goals and drama right until the very end, ultimately concluding with both nations going through.

	Algeria	Austria
Possession	65%	35%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	12(5)	10(3)
Corners	0	3
Fouls	3	7

SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 3AM

JORDAN (0) 1
(Al Tamari 55)

ARGENTINA (2) 3
(Lo Celso 19, La. Martinez 31 pen, Messi 80)

Dallas Stadium
Att: 70,649 Ref: Istvan Kovacs (Rou)

JORDAN Abulaila – Nasib, Al Arab, Abu Dahab (Obaid 90); Haddad, Al Rashdan (Jamous 76), Al Rawabdeh, Abu Taha; Azaizeh (Al Tamari 46), Olwan (Abu Zraiq 90); Fakhoury (Al Mardi 46)
■ Abu Taha, Al Arab, Abu Zraiq
ARGENTINA E. Martinez – Palacios, Otamendi, Senesi, Tagliafico; Simeone (Barco 71), Paz (Mac Allister 61), Paredes, Lo Celso (Almada 60); La. Martinez (Messi 60), Alvarez (Lopez 82)

GOALS

0-1 Giovani Lo Celso wins a free-kick and deceives Yazeed Abulaila to guide it into the top corner. It's Argentina's first goal of this World Cup not to be scored by Lionel Messi.
0-2 Argentina are awarded a penalty when Nizar Al Rashdan catches Marcos Senesi in the face, and Lautaro Martinez sends Abulaila the wrong way from the spot.
1-2 A nice passage of passes from Jordan culminates in Ehsan Haddad picking out Mousa Al Tamari, who finishes.
1-3 Messi is pulled down for a free-kick that he sends low to become the first-ever player to score in seven consecutive World Cup matches.

First free-kick... Lo Celso scores Argentina's opener

FREE-KICKS MAKE THE DIFFERENCE

Argentina, who had the luxury of resting a host of first-teamers, dominated possession against already-eliminated Jordan, and Giovani Lo Celso could have had an opener earlier than he did, as the World Cup debutant finished off a lovely passage of play but was caught offside. Lo Celso and fellow goalscorer Lautaro Martinez teamed up in the second half, but the latter just strayed offside beforehand, while Jordan tried to create problems and eventually pulled a goal back. Messi, fresh off the bench, wasn't to be denied as he made the result safe for *La Albiceleste*.

	Jordan	Argentina
Possession	27%	73%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	5(1)	12(4)
Corners	2	6
Fouls	13	7

GROUP K

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 6PM

PORTUGAL (1) 1
(J. Neves 6)

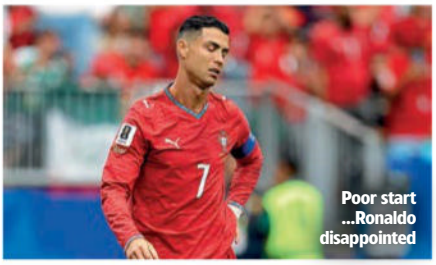
DR CONGO (1) 1
(Wissa 45+5)

Houston Stadium
Att: 68,777 Ref: Abdulrahman Al Jasim (Qat)

PORTUGAL D. Costa – Cancelo, Araujo, Veiga, Mendes (Semedo 72); J. Neves, Vitinha (Ramos 83); B. Silva (Conceicao 46), Fernandes, Neto (Leao 71); Ronaldo
■ B. Silva, Semedo, Araujo
DR CONGO Mpasi – Wan-Bissaka (Kalulu 85), Mbemba, Tuanzebe, Kapuadi, Masuaku (J. Kayembe 74); Mukau (Sadiki 57), Moutoussamy, E. Kayembe (Pickel 74); Wissa, Bakambu (Banza 85)
■ Mbemba

GOALS

1-0 Pedro Neto clips in a cross from the left. Inserting himself between two defenders, little Joao Neves leaps to glance powerfully in.
1-1 After a short corner routine, Arthur Masuaku's delivery picks out a completely unmarked Yoane Wissa, whose thumping header gives the Democratic Republic of Congo their first-ever World Cup goal.


Poor start ...Ronaldo disappointed

DR CONGO FRUSTRATE PORTUGAL

So much for the statistical tale of the tape. Despite Portugal outpointing DR Congo three to one in terms of possession and completed passes, the all-important fact is that Cristiano Ronaldo, Bruno Fernandes, Vitinha et al. had fewer attempts on goal than the Leopards. Roberto Martinez's side may have had control of proceedings, yet did precious little with it, too content to overdose on square balls and cruelly lacking in tempo. Nor did it help to have Ronaldo almost entirely on the periphery. DRC, blessed with a solid corps of Premier League experience, totally deserved a point, resilient, energetic, well drilled and, in a world turned upside down, seemingly far more assured than their illustrious opponents.

	Portugal	DR Congo
Possession	75%	25%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	7(1)	8(2)
Corners	5	4
Fouls	9	10

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 3AM

UZBEKISTAN (0) 1
(Fayzullaev 60)

COLOMBIA (1) 3
(Munoz 40, Diaz 65, Campaz 90+9)

Estadio Azteca, Mexico City
Att: 80,824 Ref: Anthony Taylor (Eng)

UZBEKISTAN Yusupov – Khusanov, Abdullaev, Ashurmatov (Uruzov 77); Karimov, Mozgovoy, Shukurov, Nasrullaev (Sayfiev 46); Fayzullaev (Amonov 77), Uronov (Khamdamov 46); Shomurodov (Sergeev 90+3)
■ Khusanov
COLOMBIA Vargas – Munoz, Sanchez, Lucumi, Mojica; Puerta (Rios 80), Lerma, J. Arias (Castano 90+3); James (Campaz 72), Suarez (Hernandez 80), Diaz (Gomez 90+3)
■ Mojica

GOALS

0-1 Luis Diaz conjures a magnificent through ball. Full-back Daniel Munoz times his run to perfection and stretches to volley home.
1-1 Uzbekistan striker Eldor Shomurodov's acrobatic volley is fumbled by Camilo Vargas and Abbosbek Fayzullaev heads in the ricochet.
1-2 Luis Diaz is set up on the edge of the box. His shot is only partially parried by Utkir Yusupov, and the ball rolls slowly inside the far post.
1-3 Wide on the right, sub Cucho Hernandez regains possession and delivers a pearl of a cross, which Jaminton Campaz heads home.

Decisive... Luis Diaz

COLOMBIA SHOW THEIR CLASS

Unsurprisingly for a team coached by former Italy centre-back Fabio Cannavaro, Uzbekistan approached their first-ever World Cup match with a safety-first game plan: two heavily-manned defensive barriers and striker Eldor Shomurodov instructed to chase and harry. It was much to their credit that they stayed in the game until the end, even managing to strike the bar in stoppage time through a Jakhongir Urozov thunderbolt. Without the class of Luis Diaz, Colombia might not have prevailed.

	Uzbekistan	Colombia
Possession	39%	61%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	8(2)	15(4)
Corners	3	4
Fouls	14	11

TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 6PM

PORTUGAL (3) 5
(Ronaldo 6, 39, Mendes 17, Nematov 60 og, Leao 87)

UZBEKISTAN (0) 0

Houston Stadium
Att: 68,777 Ref: Jalal Jayed (Mor)

PORTUGAL D. Costa – Cancelo (Semedo 46), Dias, Veiga, Mendes; J. Neves (B. Silva 76), Vitinha (Leao 83); Neto (Conceicao 46), Fernandes, Felix (Trincao 63); Ronaldo
■ Veiga
UZBEKISTAN Nematov – Khusanov, Abdullaev, Ashurmatov; Karimov (Jiyanov 90+2), Hamrobekov (Mozgovoy 46), Shukurov (Esanov 90+2), Nasrullaev (Alijonov 46); Ganiev, Fayzullaev (Sergeev 73); Shomurodov
■ Hamrobekov

GOALS

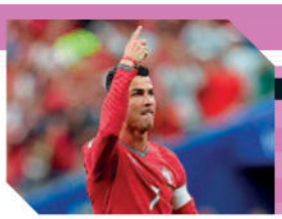
1-0 Joao Cancelo bursts forward to cross low into the box, and Cristiano Ronaldo meets it with a sweetly-struck half-volley.
2-0 With the focus on Ronaldo, left-back Nuno Mendes curls a free-kick into the bottom corner.
3-0 Bruno Fernandes drives upfield before releasing Ronaldo, who expertly passes the ball across the keeper into the net.
4-0 A low Fernandes corner sparks chaos, the ball eventually rolling in via touches off Abdukodir Khusanov and Abduvohid Nematov.
5-0 Substitute Nelson Semedo puts in a cross that is deflected into the path of Rafael Leao, who lashes home.

Surprise... Mendes scores a free-kick

LIFT-OFF FOR PORTUGAL

So insipid against DR Congo a few days earlier, Portugal redeemed themselves, playing with far more intensity, quicker in their passing and generally creating a fine platform for captain Cristiano Ronaldo, the first player to score in six World Cups. Uzbekistan attacking midfielder Aziz Ganiev did score a spectacular first-half goal which briefly upset the apple cart, but it was ruled out for a foul in the build-up.

	Portugal	Uzbekistan
Possession	66%	34%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	17(9)	7(2)
Corners	3	2
Fouls	14	15



GROUP K

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
COLOMBIA	3	2	1	0	4	1	7
PORTUGAL	3	1	2	0	6	1	5
DR CONGO	3	1	1	1	4	3	4
UZBEKISTAN	3	0	0	3	2	11	0

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 3AM

COLOMBIA (0) 1
(Munoz 76)

DR CONGO (0) 0

Estadio Guadalajara
Att: 45,358 Ref: Maurizio Mariani (Ita)

COLOMBIA Vargas – Munoz, Sanchez, Lucumi, Mojica; Puerta, Lerma, J. Arias (Rios 77); James (Quintero 58), Suarez (Cordoba 58), Diaz
■ Lucumi, Lerma
DR CONGO Mpasi – Wan-Bissaka, Mbemba, Tuanzebe, Kapuadi, Masuaku (J. Kayembe 72); Mukau (Sadiki 46), Moutoussamy (Mbuku 82), E. Kayembe (Pickel 72); Bakambu (Banza 57), Wissa
■ Pickel

GOALS

1-0 Juan Fernando Quintero looks to make things happen with a through ball into the box. While substitute Jhon Cordoba goes down looking for a penalty, the pieces are picked up by full-back Daniel Munoz, whose deflected shot beats the keeper at his near post.

Match winner... Daniel Munoz

COLOMBIA OUTCLASS DR CONGO

Kept at bay for much of the game by the excellence of DR Congo's highly impressive goalkeeper Lionel Mpasi – who pulled off a string of top-drawer stops – the Colombians were far and away the best team on the night, fully deserving of the victory, which secured their passport to the last 32. In truth, *Los Cafeteros* should have romped home by a country mile. Thanks to their individual flair and smart inter-play, they constantly had their opponents under extreme pressure, peppering Mpasi's goal with no fewer than 20 shots and having three goals ruled out for offside: two netted by star man Luis Diaz and another bundled in early in the game by Daniel Munoz, who would later turn providential match winner. Only in the final few minutes did Sebastien Desabre's side offer any sort of attacking threat, but it was too little, too late.

Possession	
63.5%	36.5%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	
20(9)	7(1)
Corners	
5	4
Fouls	
12	16

SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 12.30AM

COLOMBIA (0) 0

PORTUGAL (0) 0

Miami Stadium
Att: 64,478 Ref: Alireza Faghani (Aus)

COLOMBIA Vargas – S. Arias (Munoz 87), Sanchez, Lucumi, Machado; J. Arias (Castano 76), Lerma (Rios 60), Puerta; James (Quintero 76), Cordoba (Suarez 60), Diaz
■ Puerta
PORTUGAL D. Costa – Cancelo (Dalot 46), Dias, Veiga, Mendes (Nunes 90+2); R. Neves (J. Neves 46), Vitinha (S. Costa 70); Neto, Fernandes, Felix (Leao 70); Ronaldo

Midfield battle...James v Vitinha

POINT ENOUGH TO KEEP COLOMBIA TOP

As one might have expected from two technically-gifted, attack-conscious sides, the end result was a pulsating clash, replete with stylishly-fashioned chances to score, great saves from the respective keepers and lots of competitive turbulence all round. The only missing ingredient: goals. Colombia very much deserved to pick up the point they required to stay atop Group K. In defence, where former Tottenham Hotspur centre-back Davinson Sanchez was especially strong, *Los Cafeteros* proved more than a match for the many creative and front-running stars in the Portugal line-up and the South Americans were just as keen to impress in advanced manoeuvres, racking up no fewer than 24 shots. Overall, Colombia looked the more accomplished and purposeful side and Portugal coach Roberto Martinez would not have been at all pleased to see his team playing second-fiddle in the control stakes. The most contentious moment of the game was undoubtedly the late headed goal from Sanchez, who met James Rodriguez's superb delivery but was deemed to be offside by a mere toenail, the tightest of tight calls.

Possession	
55%	45%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	
24(6)	13(2)
Corners	
5	2
Fouls	
12	6

SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 12.30AM

DR CONGO (0) 3
(Wissa 68 pen, 90+1, Mayele 78)

UZBEKISTAN (1) 1
(Shomurodov 10)

Atlanta Stadium
Att: 68,239 Ref: Felix Zwayer (Ger)

DR CONGO Mpasi – Wan-Bissaka, Mbemba, Tuanzebe, Masuaku (J. Kayembe 83); Mbuku (Elia 72), Moutoussamy (Mukau 72), Sadiki, Cipenga (Bongonda 72); Bakambu (Mayele 51), Wissa
■ Sadiki, Mbuku, Moutoussamy
UZBEKISTAN Nematov – Ashurmatov, Khusanov, Urozov (Sergeev 82); Alijonov, Mozgovoy (Iskanderov 82), Shukurov (Hamrobekov 59), Nasrullaev; Khamdamov (Ganiev 59), Fayzullaev, (Uronov 73); Shomurodov
■ Khusanov, Nasrullaev

GOALS

0-1 Running onto a ball in the channel, Eldor Shomurodov improvises a masterly lob over the goalkeeper from a seemingly impossible angle.
1-1 After a Nathanael Mbuku cross, Abdukodir Khusanov clumsily upends Yoane Wissa, who picks himself up to coolly roll in the spot-kick.
2-1 Cutting in from the left, Meschack Elia lets fly, and a deflection allows Fiston Mayele to beat the keeper to the ball and flick home.
3-1 Elia keeps the ball in play and lays it back to Wissa, who moves slightly inside before swivelling to bend a strike into the far corner.

Slotted... Wissa scores from the spot

WISSA FIRES DR CONGO THROUGH

Fifty-two years after DR Congo – or Zaire as they were known at the time – spectacularly flopped at the 1974 World Cup, the modern-day Leopards at last achieved redemption, this come-from-behind victory handing them their first-ever invitation to the knockout stages of the competition. Uzbekistan, disciplined and alert, were in the ascendancy for most of the first half, but proved unable to resist when DRC palpably upped their commitment and energy levels following the interval.

Possession	
58%	42%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	
19(4)	3(1)
Corners	
2	4
Fouls	
6	16

GROUP L

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 17, 9PM

ENGLAND (2) 4
(Kane 12 pen, 42, Bellingham 47, Rashford 85)

CROATIA (2) 2
(Baturina 36, Musa 45+5)

Dallas Stadium
Att: 70,389 Ref: Clement Turpin (Fra)

ENGLAND Pickford – James, Konsa, Stones (Guehi 87), O'Reilly; Anderson, Rice (Rogers 72); Madueke (Saka 72), Bellingham (Spence 80), Gordon (Rashford 72); Kane
CROATIA Livakovic – Sutalo, Vuskovic (Marco Pasalic 66), Gvardiol; Stanisic, Modric (Kovacic 58), Mario Pasalic (Kramaric 78), Perisic; P. Sucic, Baturina (Vlasic 78); Musa (Matanovic 66)

GOALS

1-0 When Noni Madueke is kicked by Luka Modric, Harry Kane's penalty is saved but a retake is ordered due to Dominik Livakovic coming off his line. England's captain makes no mistake the second time.
1-1 Petar Sucic lays the ball back and Martin Baturina hits an emphatic first-time strike into the top corner that Jordan Pickford can't keep out despite getting a hand to it.
2-1 Kane rises unchallenged and meets Declan Rice's corner with a powerful header.
2-2 Ivan Perisic heads Mario Pasalic's clipped ball towards Petar Musa, who volleys home.
3-2 Jude Bellingham races onto a pass from Elliot Anderson into the right channel and the Real Madrid man fires a shot in off the far post.
4-2 England break at speed down the right flank and Bukayo Saka squares to Marcus Rashford, who cuts inside and finishes.

Captains tussle... Modric v Kane

CROATS BLOWN AWAY IN SECOND HALF

After a first half that saw Croatia respond to any blow England inflicted, the Three Lions took control in the second period. Despite Dominik Livakovic making a flurry of stops, including a triple save to deny Nico O'Reilly, Anthony Gordon and Ezri Konsa, Marcus Rashford eventually gave his side the buffer they craved.

	ENGLAND	CROATIA
Possession	52%	48%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	22(11)	10(5)
Corners	8	2
Fouls	10	12

THURSDAY, JUNE 18, 12AM

GHANA (0) 1
(Yirenkyi 90+5)

PANAMA (0) 0

Toronto Stadium
Att: 42,942 Ref: Glenn Nyberg (Swe)

GHANA Ati Zigi (Asare 46) – Senaya, Adjetey, Opoku, Mensah; Yirenkyi, Owusu (Sibo 78), Sulemana (Thomas-Asante 58); Nuamah (Fatawu 58), Ayew (Adu 87), Semenyo
■ Yirenkyi
PANAMA Mosquera – Ramos, Cordoba, Andrade; Murillo, Harvey, Barcenas, Blackman (Godoy 90); Martinez (Londono 63), Waterman (Fajardo 63), J. Rodriguez (Diaz 74)
■ Blackman, Harvey

GOALS

1-0 Sub Brandon Thomas-Asante slips past Jose Cordoba and squares the ball for Caleb Yirenkyi to apply a simple last-gasp finish.

Late winner... Caleb Yirenkyi

GHANA LEAVE IT LATE

After a bore-fest in the first half, where Ghana failed to register a single shot, the Black Stars eventually triumphed with a last-gasp winner. Cecilio Waterman's effort for Panama in the second minute brought an eye-catching save out of Lawrence Ati Zigi, but it was the first half's only shot on target. There was concern for Ghana when their goalkeeper had to be replaced at half-time, especially as the game opened up. Jonas Adjetey had a header on goal within three minutes of the restart and at the other end Cristian Martinez fired into the side netting, but Ghana created more with an outstanding Amir Murillo tackle required to stop Brandon Thomas-Asante's ball from reaching Jordan Ayew in front of goal and Adjetey heading agonisingly wide. After Ghana's winner finally arrived in the 95th minute, they survived a scare four minutes later when Panama keeper Orlando Mosquera came up for a free-kick and nodded Yoel Barcenas' cross down for Ismael Diaz, but he headed straight at Benjamin Asare.

	GHANA	PANAMA
Possession	38%	62%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	7(2)	11(4)
Corners	2	2
Fouls	9	11

TUESDAY, JUNE 23, 9PM

ENGLAND (0) 0

GHANA (0) 0

Boston Stadium
Att: 63,983 Ref: Said Martinez (Hon)

ENGLAND Pickford – James, Konsa, Guehi, Spence (O'Reilly 66); Anderson (Eze 74), Rice; Madueke (Rashford 83), Bellingham (Rogers 74), Gordon (Saka 65); Kane
■ Rice
GHANA Asare – Senaya (Peprah Oppong 87), Adjetey, Opoku, Mensah; Partey; Williams (Fatawu 66), Yirenkyi, Sibo, Semenyo; Ayew (Adu 67, Rahman 90+5)
■ Williams

Rare miss... Kane skied a big chance

ENGLAND HELD BY RESOLUTE GHANA

The script for most of this match was set out early on: England controlling possession without doing much with it, while Ghana sat deep and repelled any of their advances. In addition to their ability to prevent Thomas Tuchel's side from creating chances, the Black Stars' dedication could be seen in Jordan Ayew and Caleb Yirenkyi both having to receive treatment for head injuries. Declan Rice had the Three Lions' best opportunity of the first half but headed over from a Noni Madueke cross, while Harry Kane saw a shot blocked before the break when he was surrounded by four yellow shirts. There were more blocked efforts after the break, while England also had a scare when Ezri Konsa and Marc Guehi were both required to stop Prince Adu as he raced into their box – and Konsa was fortunate not to concede a penalty for his challenge. There was a late flurry of opportunities for the Three Lions, but Bukayo Saka's shot was saved after the winger had worked space, Nico O'Reilly headed against the crossbar and from the follow-up Kane inexplicably blazed his shot over the bar – a rare miss for a player closing in on England's World Cup goal record.

	ENGLAND	GHANA
Possession	79%	21%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	19(3)	2(1)
Corners	9	2
Fouls	14	24

GROUP L

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
ENGLAND	3	2	1	0	6	2	7
CROATIA	3	2	0	1	5	5	6
GHANA	3	1	1	1	2	2	4
PANAMA	3	0	0	3	0	4	0

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 24, 12AM

PANAMA (0) 0

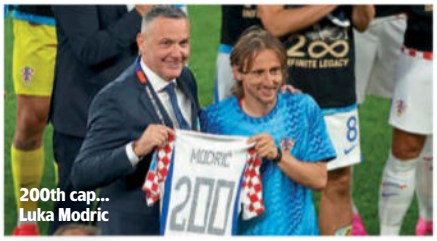
CROATIA (0) 1
(Budimir 54)

Toronto Stadium
Att: 43,036 Ref: Pierre Atcho (Gab)

PANAMA Mosquera – Murillo, Ramos (Waterman 77), Cordoba, Andrade, Blackman (Davis 90); Martinez, Harvey, Barcenas (T. Rodriguez 90), J. Rodriguez; Fajardo (Londono 83)
■ Barcenas
CROATIA Livakovic – Stanisic, Sutalo, Pongracic, Gvardiol (Kramaric 46); Modric (Mario Pasalic 81), Kovacic (P. Sucic 72); Marco Pasalic (L. Susic 72), Baturina, Perisic; Musa (Budimir 46)
■ P. Sucic

GOALS

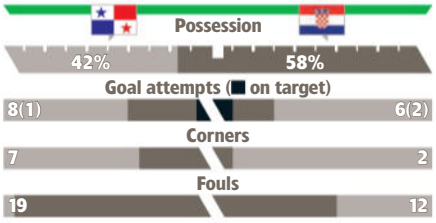
0-1 Josip Stanisic plays a one-two with Marco Pasalic and delivers a cross to the back post that Ante Budimir guides home.



200th cap... Luka Modric

CROATIA PIP PANAMA

Having edged the first half against Croatia, Panama will be kicking themselves for not making the most of their advantage. Cristian Martinez and Amir Murillo provided a constant threat on their right flank, delivering a series of crosses that Dominik Livakovic just about kept out, notably tipping a Jose Luis Rodriguez header onto the crossbar. Even Luka Modric was guilty of sloppily conceding possession, although it ultimately went unpunished. By half-time, Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic had seen enough, taking action with a double substitution that paid off just nine minutes later when one of the subs scored the game's only goal. Marco Pasalic should have doubled the lead shortly afterwards, but dinked the ball straight at Orlando Mosquera and smashed the rebound off target. Panama had their moments, with Livakovic forced into a terrific double save to deny Murillo and then Carlos Harvey, but in the end *Los Canaleros* succumbed to a second narrow defeat and were eliminated from the tournament.



SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 10PM

CROATIA (1) 2
(P. Sucic 31, Vlasic 83)

GHANA (0) 1
(Luckassen 73)

Philadelphia Stadium
Att: 68,324 Ref: Drew Fischer (Can)

CROATIA Livakovic – Stanisic, Sutalo, Pongracic, Perisic; Modric, Kovacic (Mario Pasalic 78); Vlasic (Gvardiol 88), P. Sucic, Baturina (Marco Pasalic 88); Budimir (Matanovic 66)
■ Perisic
GHANA Asare – Senaya, Adjetey (Peprah Oppong 46), Luckassen, Mensah; Partey; Semenyo, Owusu (Fatawu 46), Sibo (Yirenkyi 85), Sulemana (Nuamah 71); Ayew (Thomas-Asante 71)
■ Peprah Oppong

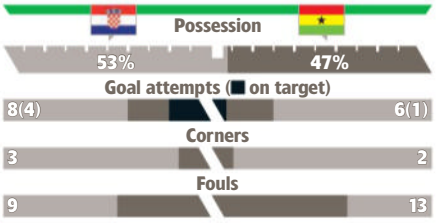
GOALS

1-0 Petar Sucic receives the ball and hits a shot that fizzes through Derrick Luckassen's legs on its way into the bottom corner.
1-1 Shortly after coming on, Ernest Nuamah delivers a beautifully shaped free-kick that Luckassen guides past Dominik Livakovic. After a tense VAR check for offside, the goal is given.
2-1 Nikola Vlasic meets Luka Modric's corner with a brilliant header that goes in off the post.

Scorer and creator...Vlasic hugs Modric

WILY CROATIANS FIND A WAY PAST GHANA

Chances were scarce in Philly, but Croatia had the better of the first half even before Petar Sucic's opener, as Nikola Vlasic hit the post and Ivan Perisic headed straight at Benjamin Asare. Antoine Semenyo came closest for Ghana before the break, before two half-time changes by Carlos Queiroz helped turn the tide. Abdul Fatawu added extra intent, firing marginally over and then coming agonisingly close to finding Semenyo in the box, before fellow substitute Ernest Nuamah set up the equaliser. The Black Stars were only level for ten minutes though, as Croatia found a way to get back on top. Mario Pasalic's shot drew a fine save from Asare, but they scored fom the resulting corner.



SATURDAY, JUNE 27, 10PM

PANAMA (0) 0

ENGLAND (0) 2
(Bellingham 62, Kane 67)

New York/New Jersey Stadium
Att: 80,663 Ref: Abdulrahman Al Jassim (Qat)

PANAMA Mosquera – Murillo, Escobar, Cordoba, Andrade, Gutierrez (Davis 88); Martinez, Harvey (Quintero 88), Barcenas (Diaz 71), J. Rodriguez (Londono 71); T. Rodriguez (Fajardo 46)
■ Fajardo, Andrade
ENGLAND Pickford – Quansah (Spence 63), Konsa, Guehi, O'Reilly; Anderson (J. Henderson 84); Saka (Madueke 63), Rogers, Bellingham (Eze 71), Rashford; Kane (Watkins 84)
■ Quansah

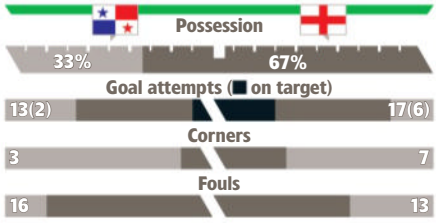
GOALS

0-1 Jude Bellingham gets the better of Jorge Gutierrez to hook home Bukayo Saka's corner.
0-2 Bellingham works some space on the left and digs out a cross for Harry Kane to head in and become England's record World Cup scorer.

Difference-maker...Jude Bellingham

BELLINGHAM BAILS ENGLAND OUT

Jude Bellingham didn't believe he deserved to be named Player of the Match v Ghana, but he was undoubtedly the difference between the two teams here. England controlled possession for large periods but lacked conviction in the first half, with Marcus Rashford coming closest to opening the scoring but heading over and sending a free-kick marginally wide. There was a flurry of near-misses early in the second half: Jose Cordoba's panicked clearance hit Andres Andrade on its way behind, Jose Luis Rodriguez curled an effort wide and Kane's powerful shot was saved. But once again, Bellingham rose to the occasion with a goal and assist five minutes apart, securing top spot for the Three Lions albeit far from convincingly. Panama, much improved on their last meeting with England, a 6-1 defeat in 2018, thought they'd pulled a late goal back, but Jose Fajardo was flagged offside.



ROUND OF 32

SUNDAY, JUNE 28, 8PM

SOUTH AFRICA (0) 0

CANADA (0) 1
(Eustaquio 90+2)

Los Angeles Stadium Att: 69,237 Ref: Joao Pinheiro (Por)

Late winner...Eustaquio watches his shot fly in

SOUTH AFRICA Williams – Mudau, Okon, Mbokazi, Modiba; Mokoena, Sithole; Maseko (Moremi 86), Mofokeng (Mbatha 46), Appollis; Makgopa (Rayners 86)
CANADA Crepeau – Johnston, Bombito (De Fougerolles 59), Cornelius, Laryea; Buchanan (Davies 75), Saliba (Sigur 59), Eustaquio, Millar (Shaffelburg 70); J. David, Oluwaseyi (P. David 70)
■ Saliba, Sigur

GOALS

0-1 Canada substitute Jacob Shaffelburg crosses into the box from the right wing. The South Africans head clear, but only to midfield dynamo Stephen Eustaquio, who controls with his chest and lashes home spectacularly into the bottom corner past Ronwen Williams.

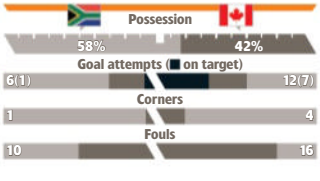
CANADA'S WORLD CUP RIDE GOES ON

Co-hosts Canada had to wait patiently for the goal to send them into the last 16 of the tournament, the furthest they have ever gone in a World Cup. But the belated moment of deliverance only made the victory sweeter, arriving at the end of a frustrating hour-and-a-half of mainly sterile domination, the odd chance going begging and a thoroughly negative South Africa somehow managing to grimly resist. *Bafana Bafana* looked like a team playing for a penalty shootout, erecting two solid banks in front of their goal, and endlessly playing the ball sideways. Enterprising it most definitely was not, though they do deserve credit for the resilience and determination shown by their defenders, exemplified by Aubrey Modiba's smart clearance on the line from Moise Bombito's header and Mbekezeli Mbokazi's sensational block to prevent Jonathan David scoring. Canada looked so much more incisive when Bayern Munich wide man Alphonso Davies – back after repeated hamstring problems – appeared for the last 15 minutes of the game.

"The hard work of these guys, the character of them, they're Canadian heroes. That's what I told them at the end"
Canada coach Jesse Marsch

MATTER OF FACT

At 74 years old, South Africa head coach Hugo Broos became the oldest manager to take charge of a World Cup knockout game.



MONDAY, JUNE 29, 6PM

BRAZIL (0) 2
(Casemiro 56, Martinelli 90+5)

JAPAN (1) 1
(Sano 29)

Houston Stadium Att: 68,777 Ref: Maurizio Mariani (Ita)

Aerial bombardment ...Casemiro heads home

BRAZIL Alisson – Danilo, Marquinhos, Gabriel, Douglas Santos; Bruno Guimaraes (Danilo Santos 90+8), Casemiro (Fabinho 90+3), Paqueta (Endrick 46); Rayan, Matheus Cunha (Martinelli 66), Vinicius Junior
■ Casemiro, Danilo
JAPAN Z. Suzuki – Tomiyasu, Taniguchi, H. Ito; Doan (Sugawara 66), Sano, Kamada (Tanaka 78), Nakamura (J. Suzuki 66); J. Ito (Machino 78), Maeda; Ueda (Ogawa 90+7)
■ Sano, Kamada, J. Suzuki

GOALS

0-1 Kaishu Sano intercepts a misplaced pass from Brazilian right-back Danilo and motors forward. Sano stumbles a little as he approaches the box, but still manages to hit a screamer past Alisson in the *Selecao* goal.
1-1 Gabriel clips an inviting cross to the far post, where Casemiro plants a header into the back of the Japan net from close range.
2-1 Rayan pinches possession on the edge of Japan's penalty area and passes inside to Bruno Guimaraes, who plays in substitute Gabriel Martinelli. The Arsenal star adroitly scores the stoppage-time winner via the far post.

BRAZIL'S AERIAL BOMBARDMENT SINKS JAPAN

Japan, who have yet to win a knockout-round game at the World Cup, came very close to banishing that hoodoo, more than a match for the Brazilians in the first half and tenaciously battling away in the second.
No doubt concerned by Brazil's pedestrian work in midfield and lack of front-running threat in the opening 45, *Selecao* boss Carlo Ancelotti found himself obliged to issue a Plan B: the call received loud and clear to play with more intensity and the repeated use of balls into the box to put the smaller Japanese rear-guard under pressure. In the second half alone, the Brazilians delivered no fewer than 28 crosses, an aerial assault which arguably was the key factor in turning the tide.

"At half-time, I told the boys not to lose patience. Knowing how to suffer is part of the game. We know we're on the right road"
Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti

MATTER OF FACT

In Brazil's five World Cup matches against Asian opponents, they have a 100% record, scoring 16 goals and conceding just two.

MONDAY, JUNE 29, 9.30PM

GERMANY (0) 1
(Havertz 54)

PARAGUAY (1) 1
(Enciso 42)

After Extra-Time; 1-1 at 90 mins; Paraguay win 4-3 on penalties

Boston Stadium Att: 63,945 Ref: Jalal Jayed (Mar)

Shootout hero...Orlando Gill saves Nick Woltemade's penalty

GERMANY Neuer – Kimmich, Tah, Rudiger (Thiaw 110), Brown; Sane (Woltemade 88), Nmecha (Goretzka 46), Pavlovic (Anton 79), Wirtz (Amiri 110); Havertz, Undav (Musiala 63)
Havertz, Musiala
PARAGUAY Gill – Caceres (Ojeda 99), G. Gomez, Canale, Alonso (Balbuena 120+2); Almiron (Velasquez 90), Bobadilla (Sanabria 99), Cubas, Galarza; Avalos (Caballero 55), Enciso (Mauricio 57)
Cubas, Galarza

PENALTIES (Germany first)

Havertz	0-0	0-1	Mauricio
Kimmich	1-1	1-2	G. Gomez
Musiala	2-2	2-3	Galarza
Woltemade	2-3	2-3	Sanabria
Amiri	3-3	3-3	Balbuena
Tah	3-3	3-4	Canale

GOALS

0-1 In an all-too rare Paraguayan moment of creative intent, Miguel Almiron releases Matias Galarza on the right with a delightful reverse-pass. When the cross comes in, Julio Enciso is the only one to attack it, nodding forcibly home.

1-1 A Florian Wirtz centre from the left picks out Kai Havertz, who does brilliantly to flick a pinpoint header into the bottom corner.

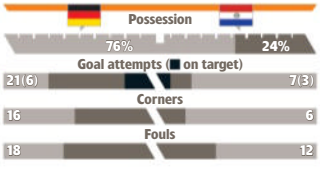
GERMANY'S FIRST TASTE OF WC SHOOTOUT HEARTBREAK

The *Nationalmannschaft*, culpable of failing to turn their territorial supremacy into what should have been a comfortable win and losing their first penalty shootout at a World Cup, will be hard-pressed to live down this nightmare. Despite enjoying the bulk of the possession, Julian Nagelsmann's side often gave the impression of having a metaphorical ball and chain as part of their kit, stifled as much by the Paraguayans' resilience and doggedness as their own stodgy, unimaginative approach play. Nor did the Germans prove any better in the shootout, the decisive misses of Kai Havertz, Nick Woltemade and Jonathan Tah symptomatic of a long-term national team malaise. While unlucky to have a goal ruled out by VAR in extra-time – Tah's header annulled for a block on the Paraguay keeper – the Germans only have themselves to blame.

"It's a scandal that [the referee] overturned this decision [to disallow the Tah goal]. I have no idea what he saw there"
Germany coach Julian Nagelsmann

MATTER OF FACT

Julio Enciso's header was Paraguay's first-ever goal in the knockout stages of a World Cup.



TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 2AM

NETHERLANDS (0) 1
(Gakpo 72)

MOROCCO (0) 1
(Diop 90+1)

After Extra-Time; 1-1 at 90 mins; Morocco win 3-2 on penalties

Estadio Monterrey Att: 51,243 Ref: Wilton Sampaio (Bra)

Shootout...players watch the winning penalty go in

NETHERLANDS Verbruggen – Dumfries, Van Hecke, Van Dijk, Ake (Koopmeiners 71), Van der Ven (Hato 86); Gravenberch (Q. Timber 86), De Jong (De Roon 110); Sumerville, Brobbey (Weghorst 71), Gakpo (Kluivert 113)
MOROCCO Bounou – Hakimi, Diop, Riad (Salah-Eddine 75), Mazraoui; Bouaddi (El Mourabet 79), El Aynaoui; Brahim (Yassine 79), Ounahi (Rahimi 86), El Khannouss (Talbi 87); Saibari
Diop

PENALTIES (Netherlands first)

Koopmeiners	1-0	1-0	El Aynaoui
Kluivert	1-0	1-1	Rahimi
Weghorst	2-1	2-2	Talbi
Q. Timber	2-2	2-2	Hakimi
Summerville	2-2	2-3	Saibari

GOALS

1-0 Freshly-introduced Dutch target man Wout Weghorst flicks on a Bart Verbruggen clearance for Crysencio Summerville to run onto. As he is challenged, Summerville feeds Cody Gakpo, who makes no mistake.

1-1 Morocco's last throw of the dice sees Chemsdine Talbi's measured cross met by centre-back Issa Diop, who dramatically heads in the leveller.

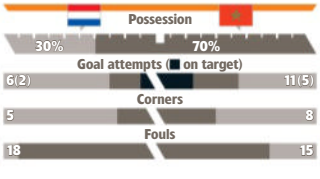
DUTCH PUNISHED FOR DEFENSIVE TACTICS

Morocco, Africa's leading football force these past few years, had to go the long way round to beat the Dutch to a spot in the last 16, conceding the opening goal of the game with just 20 minutes remaining, only equalising in stoppage time and then prevailing in a generally shoddy shootout littered with misses. Defeat, in whatever form, would have been hard on the Atlas Lions. In marked contrast to Ronald Koeman's timid crew, Morocco were proactive, purposeful and very much in control, only prevented from running riot by outstanding *Oranje* keeper Bart Verbruggen, whose save-of-the-tournament contender from Soufiane Rahimi was world class. Koeman's decision to ditch the team's usual 4-3-3 template for a safety-first five-man backline was effectively a white flag.

"You watch from the sidelines. I'm here with the team and I'd do it again"
Netherlands coach Ronald Koeman responds to his critics

MATTER OF FACT

The game was a historic one for Morocco right-back and skipper Achraf Hakimi, who won his 100th international cap.



ROUND OF 32

TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 6PM

IVORY COAST (0) 1
(Amad 74)
NORWAY (1) 2
(Nusa 39, Haaland 86)

Dallas Stadium Att: 69,665 Ref: Jesus Valenzuela (Ven)

Bundled in ...Haaland's late winner

IVORY COAST Y. Fofana – Doue, Kossounou, Agbadou, Konan (Toure 90+3); Kessie, Sangare, Inao Oulai (Amad 60); Pepe (Diakite 87), Bonny (Wahi 60), Y. Diomande (Guessand 90+3)
NORWAY Nyland – Holmgren Pedersen (Aursnes 83), Ajer, Heggem, Moller Wolfe; Odegaard, Berge, Berg; Sorloth (Schjelderup 71), Haaland, Nusa (Bobb 71)

GOALS

0-1 Norway winger Antonio Nusa makes tracks into the penalty box from the left wing, shimmying and teasing to make some room, then bending a stunning curler into the top-right corner.

1-1 Wide on the right, Ivorian substitute Amad Diallo single-mindedly looks to go for goal, playing a super one-two with Nicolas Pepe, outpacing one defender, skipping past another and finally thumping it home.

1-2 Cutting in from the right, Oscar Bobb conjures up a sublime through ball to Patrick Berg in the inside-right channel. The cut-back is converted by Erling Haaland, albeit with a certain clumsiness.

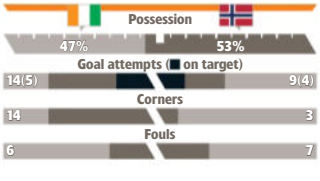
HAALAND DELIVERS AGAIN

That's the beauty of boasting a marksman of the pedigree of Erling Haaland. Prior to his late, late intervention – a goal which appeared to bounce off him more than anything else – he had done precious little in the game. But just when Norway needed an ice-breaker, there was the Manchester City giant to provide it, his fifth goal in three World Cup games this summer. With both teams displaying signs of sudden death inhibitions, the game meandered at times – not that anyone seemed to have informed Ivory Coast substitute Amad Diallo, who as well as netting a brilliant solo goal, cleared off the line from a Torbjorn Heggem volley and came close to making it 2-2 at the death with an outstanding long-range free-kick, which required every inch of Orjan Nyland's stretch.

"He [Haaland] is the greatest goalscorer in the world. He brings a coldness to the team"
Norway coach Stale Solbakken

MATTER OF FACT

The winning strike took Erling Haaland to a staggering 60 goals in just 53 appearances for Norway, averaging a goal every 72 minutes for the national team.



TUESDAY, JUNE 30, 10PM

FRANCE (1) 3
(Mbappe 45, 74, Barcola 53)
SWEDEN (0) 0

New York/New Jersey Stadium Att: 80,663 Ref: Danny Makkelie (Ned)

Too hot to handle...Mbappe lashes in France's first

FRANCE Maignan – Kounde (Gusto 75), Upamecano, Saliba, Digne (T. Hernandez 78); Tchouameni, Rabiot; Dembele (Doue 75), Olise (Cherki 85), Barcola; Mbappe (Mateta 85)
SWEDEN Widell Zetterstrom – Svensson (Svanberg 82), Lagerbielke, Lindelof, Gudmundsson; Elanga, Bergvall (Zeneli 66), Ayari (Nygren 82), Stroud (Ali 66); Gyokeres, Isak (Nilsson 89)

GOALS

1-0 Michael Olise and Ousmane Dembele take a short corner and the latter plays in Kylian Mbappe, who glides inside with brilliant feet to make an angle for himself, before rifling home an imperious shot into the far corner.

2-0 Granted far too much room in the central area, Olise punishes the Swedes with an audacious pass through Gustaf Lagerbielke's legs to Bradley Barcola, who emphatically smacks it home.

3-0 Olise is at the playmaking controls again, able to find angles from another dimension. His pass to Mbappe is just begging to be converted, and the French skipper obliges with aplomb.

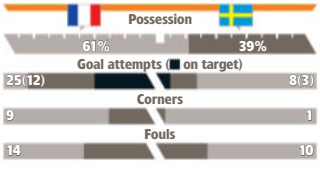
MBAPPE AND CO. TOO HOT TO HANDLE

This all-European encounter could well have ended with an even wider margin of victory for France's beautiful game exponents. Long before *Les Bleus* took the lead through Kylian Mbappe late in the first half, they had been knocking loudly at the Swedish door, Mbappe and Michael Olise both hitting the woodwork and goalkeeper Jacob Widell Zetterstrom executing several high grade stops. Football, however, can be an unpredictable business and within seconds of the French opener, the obdurate Swedes had a chance to draw level, an opportunity which midfielder Elliot Stroud blazed over from close quarters. There would be no other escape routes for Graham Potter's outclassed side. They would have to accept their fate.

"We're only in the last 16. We have very, very good players and when we play with this attitude, that's great"
France coach Didier Deschamps

MATTER OF FACT

This win saw Didier Deschamps extend his record as the manager with the most World Cup victories – 18 compared to 16 for ex-West Germany boss Helmut Schon.



WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 3AM

MEXICO (2) 2
(Quinones 22, Jimenez 31)

ECUADOR (0) 0

Estadio Azteca, Mexico City Att: 80,824 Ref: Slavko Vincic (Svn)

Star man...Julian Quinones celebrates with his team-mates

MEXICO Rangel – Sanchez, Montes, Vasquez, Gallardo; Mora (Gutierrez 58), Lira, Romo (Vargas 73); Alvarado (Reyes 80), Jimenez (Gimenez 73), Quinones (Pineda 80)
ECUADOR Galindez – Franco (Medina 46), Ordonez (Preciado 46), Pacho, Hincapie; Yeboah (J. Caicedo 79), M. Caicedo, Vite, Angulo (Paez 79); Plata, E. Valencia (Rodriguez 59)
■ Franco, Paez, M. Caicedo ■ Hincapie

GOALS

1-0 Julian Quinones collects the ball on the left inside his own half, holds off a challenge, lays the ball inside and sets off up the wing. After some neat passing between Luis Romo and Roberto Alvarado, the ball is chipped over the defence through to him and he races into the box, cuts inside and nets with a rocket launcher into the near post past keeper Hernan Galindez.
2-0 Raul Jimenez sparks unease in the Ecuadorian defence with his relentless harrying. The ball eventually squirms to Quinones, whose short lay-off to Jimenez is promptly thrashed into the top corner from 15 yards.

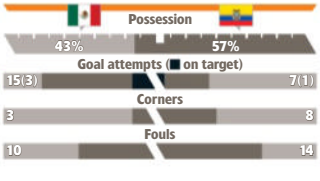
ELECTRIFYING QUINONES SPARKS MEXICO INTO LIFE

After a thunderstorm delayed kick-off at the Azteca for an hour, Mexico swiftly set about reproducing their own bolts of lightning, carving out a string of chances in the first ten minutes, including two typically impudent efforts from teenage talent Gilberto Mora and a great Luis Romo cross that Raul Jimenez only narrowly headed wide. Up against the Azteca wall of sound and Mexico's whirlwind activity, the Ecuadorians had little in the way of concerted response, and once the Mexicans had opened up a two-goal lead, they were happy to switch to control mode. The game, never a genuine contest, finished on an unsavoury note for Ecuador when Arsenal defender Piero Hincapie was red-carded in stoppage time for covering his mouth while speaking to an opponent.

"We're in good shape, very focused, very lively. We're a family, a real family"
Mexico coach Javier Aguirre

MATTER OF FACT

This was Mexico's first victory in a World Cup knockout-round tie since beating Bulgaria in the last 16 of the 1986 tournament, also on held on home soil.



WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 5PM

ENGLAND (0) 2
(Kane 75, 86)

DR CONGO (1) 1
(Cipenga 7)

Atlanta Stadium Att: 68,239 Ref: Adham Makhadmeh (Jor)

Unstoppable finish... Kane scores his second

ENGLAND Pickford – Spence (Eze 70), Konsa, Guehi, O'Reilly; Anderson, Rice (Stones 90+1); Madueke (Saka 61), Bellingham, Rashford (Gordon 61); Kane
■ Bellingham
DR CONGO Mpasi – Wan-Bissaka, Mbemba, Tuanzebe, Masuaku (J. Kayembe 89); Mukau (E. Kayembe 76), Moutoussamy (Mayele 89), Sadiki; Mbuku (Elia 64), Wissa, Cipenga (Bongonda 76)
■ Sadiki

GOALS

0-1 Chancel Mbemba's simple ball over the top sparks mayhem in the English defence and ends up with the unmarked Brian Cipenga, whose right-footed stinger beats Jordan Pickford at his near post.
1-1 England substitute Anthony Gordon loops a ball into the box from the left side and the DRC centre-backs are left flat-footed as Harry Kane rises for the headed connection. Congolese keeper Lionel Mpasi gets a hand to it but cannot keep it out.
2-1 Gordon flicks the ball to Kane on the edge of the box. England's skipper nimbly turns, moves left to right for the optimum shooting angle and lashes home an unstoppable rising effort.

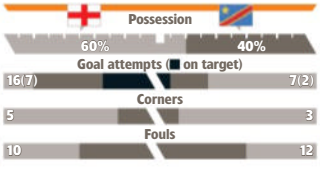
CAPTAIN KANE TO THE RESCUE FOR ENGLAND

Chasing the game for the bulk of the match, the Three Lions had one foot in the abyss, only for a golden Harry Kane brace to save their blushes as the clock ticked down. This was anything but a vintage England performance, a sorry catalogue of sloppy defending and profligacy in front of goal. But energised by the introduction of fresh attacking blood – particularly wide players Anthony Gordon and Bukayo Saka – the Three Lions piled on enough late pressure to turn the match on its head. A tough loss to take for the fearless, busy and resourceful DRC, whose keeper Mpasi had the game of his life. If only Congolese striker Yoane Wissa had not hit the post with the goal at his mercy on the stroke of half-time.

"The team didn't accept defeat. I felt no doubt from the players"
England coach Thomas Tuchel

MATTER OF FACT

This brace saw Harry Kane overtake Pele in the World Cup's all-time scoring charts: 13 to the Brazilian legend's tally of 12.



ROUND OF 32

WEDNESDAY, JULY 1, 9PM

BELGIUM (0) 3
(Lukaku 86, Tielemans 89, 120+5)

SENEGAL (1) 2
(Diarra 24, I. Sarr 51)

After Extra-Time; 2-2 at 90 mins

Seattle Stadium Att: 66,925 Ref: Said Martinez (Hon)

Contentious... Belgium's late penalty decision

BELGIUM Courtois – Castagne, Mechele, Theate, De Cuyper (Meunier 78); Tielemans, Vanaken (Moreira 63); Trossard (Onana 109), De Bruyne (Raskin 56), Doku (Lukebakio 56); De Ketelaere (Lukaku 46)
■ Mechele
SENEGAL Diaw – Diatta, Ciss, Niakhate, Jakobs (E. Diouf 94); Diarra (P. Sarr 73), Gana Gueye (B. Ndiaye 96), P. Gueye (Camara 66); I. Ndiaye (Mbaye 73), I. Sarr, Mane (Jackson 94)
■ Camara

GOALS

0-1 Sadio Mane clips in a cross from the left. Ismaila Sarr's fabulous flicked header strikes the post, but the unmissable rebound falls to Habib Diarra.

0-2 The Belgian backline is carved open by a raking long diagonal from Senegal central defender Moussa Niakhate. As the ball drops over his shoulder, the speedy Ismaila Sarr expertly controls it with his chest and leathers home a world-class finish.

1-2 A 50-50 between Pape Matar Sarr and Diego Moreira ends with the ball ricocheting to Thomas Meunier on the right side of the box. The cross to the near post is turned in by Romelu Lukaku.

2-2 Leandro Trossard's left-wing cross has Senegal GK Mory Diaw grasping at thin air. Youri Tielemans heads into the empty net.

3-2 Following a VAR review, a Belgium penalty is awarded for Lamine Camara's sliding tackle on Tielemans who, after the ensuing arguments, puts away the spot-kick calmly into the top corner.

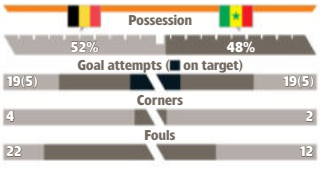
RED DEVILS LEAVE IT LATE

Belgium supporters have already dubbed this surreal conclusion to the tie as the "Miracle of Seattle". Two goals down in the 85th minute and outclassed throughout, the *Diables Rouges* looked ready for the last waltz, only to incredibly pull level within 180 seconds. While Senegal will complain that Belgium's winning penalty was a blatant injustice, the harsh truth is that extra-time would not have been necessary had the Lions of Teranga not lost their focus late on.

"The dispute between Tielemans and Trossard? That pleased me. It showed a team which is alive"
Belgium coach Rudi Garcia

MATTER OF FACT

Senegal remain on just one World Cup knockout win, a victory over Sweden in the last 16 in 2002.



THURSDAY, JULY 2, 1AM

UNITED STATES (1) 2
(Balogun 45, Tillman 82)

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA (0) 0

San Francisco Bay Area Stadium Att: 68,827 Ref: Raphael Claus (Bra)

Dismissed...Balogun's red-card offence

UNITED STATES Freese – Freeman, Richards, Ream, A. Robinson; McKennie (Reyna 90+5), Adams, Tillman; Dest (Berhalter 87), Balogun, Pulisic (Pepi 88)
■ Balogun
BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA Vasilj – Dedic, Katic (Memic 75), Muharemovic, Radeljic, Kolasinac (Tabakovic 75); Gigovic (Bajraktarevic 51), Sunjic (Tahirovic 51), Alajbegovic; Dzeko (Mahmic 51), Demirovic
■ Radeljic

GOALS

1-0 Bosnia & Herzegovina centre-back Tarik Muharemovic gets his feet in a tangle trying to deal with a Malik Tillman through ball, inadvertently setting up Folarin Balogun for a composed left-footed finish – his third goal of the tournament.

2-0 Tillman masterfully curls in a direct 20-yard free-kick. Over the wall and under the crossbar, though goalkeeper Nikola Vasilj will be severely disappointed after getting a hand to it.

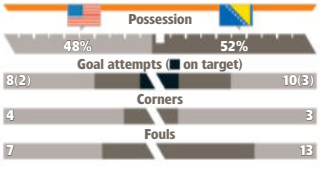
SPOTLIGHT ON BALOGUN

This hard-earned US victory against a Bosnia outfit which delights in sitting back in compact shape and frustrating opponents not only ensured a ticket to the last 16 for the co-hosts, but was also their first win in the knockout phase since the 2002 World Cup. With Bosnia never likely to simply roll over, Team America had to play with their wits about them and, once Folarin Balogun had seen red midway through the second half, Mauricio Pochettino's undermanned side had to show another side of their make-up: the willingness to fight and scrap for their dues. Balogun's dismissal – punishment for raking Tarik Muharemovic's leg and catching his ankle in a tussle for a loose ball – did seem somewhat harsh in real time, however the VAR deemed it dangerous enough to warrant a red. It would not be the last we'd hear of the incident.

"Today, not one of the 50-50 decisions went for us. The players reacted very well. We controlled the emotional part of the game"
US coach Mauricio Pochettino

MATTER OF FACT

Folarin Balogun became the first player to score and be sent off in a World Cup knockout-round game since France's Zinedine Zidane against Italy in the 2006 final.



THURSDAY, JULY 2, 8PM

SPAIN (1) 3
(Oyarzabal 36, 89, Porro 66)

AUSTRIA (0) 0

Los Angeles Stadium Att: 70,492 Ref: Glenn Nyberg (Swe)

Another brace... Mikel Oyarzabal

SPAIN Simon – Porro, Cubarsi, Laporte (Pubill 90+3), Cucurella; Rodri, Pedri (Fabian 90+3); Yamal (Gavi 85), Olmo (Merino 71), Baena (Ferran 71); Oyarzabal
AUSTRIA A. Schlager – Posch (Prass 85), Danso, Alaba, Laimer; Seiwald (Chukwuemeka 46), X. Schlager (Grillitsch 46); Schmid (Kalajdzic 60), Wanner, Sabitzer; Gregoritsch (Arnautovic 70)
■ Posch

GOALS

1-0 Pedri slides the ball out to Marc Cucurella on the left, who crosses low for Mikel Oyarzabal to sweep in from 12 yards.
2-0 After a prolonged spell of Spanish possession, Dani Olmo has a shot charged down. Cucurella picks up the pieces and passes to left-winger Alex Baena, whose centre is headed in by the unexpected figure of raiding right-back Pedro Porro.
3-0 Oyarzabal nets his fourth goal of the finals, side-footing in a perfectly-weighted Cucurella centre.

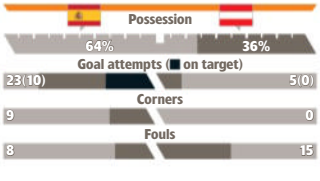
LA ROJA MAKE LIGHT WORK OF AUSTRIA

All too easy for the impressive Spanish, whose attacking fluidity, ability on the ball and imagination had a modestly-equipped Austria chasing shadows from first to last. That Spain took over 30 minutes to open their account bordered on the incredible; Austrian full-back Stefan Posch making a great last-ditch challenge to thwart Dani Olmo, *La Roja* left-back Marc Cucurella seeing a goal chalked off for a soft foul on keeper Alexander Schlager and the irrepressible Lamine Yamal forcing a fine diving save from the overworked Schlager. The gulf in class was particularly evident in midfield, the visionary and technical brilliance of Spain's Pedri and Olmo in stark contrast to the workmanlike Austrian efforts of Xaver Schlager, Nicolas Seiwald and Marcel Sabitzer. So fatigued were Ralf Rangnick's side that they were running on empty long before the end.

"A great match from us, almost perfection, but you have to keep improving. The greatness of these players is that they always want more"
Spain coach Luis de la Fuente

MATTER OF FACT

This result saw Spain become the first team to keep a clean sheet in each of their first four World Cup matches since Switzerland in 2006.



FRIDAY, JULY 3, 12AM

PORTUGAL (0) 2
(Ronaldo 68 pen, Ramos 90+4)

CROATIA (0) 1
(Perisic 53)

Toronto Stadium Att: 43,036 Ref: Espen Eskas (Nor)

Subbed...Cristiano Ronaldo came off late on

PORTUGAL D. Costa – Cancelo (Semedo 63), Dias, Veiga, Mendes; J. Neves, Vitinha (B. Silva 62); Neto (Conceicao 63), Fernandes (Ramos 63), Leao; Ronaldo (R. Neves 81)
■ Dias
CROATIA Livakovic – Stanisic, Sutalo, Pongracic, Perisic; Modric, Kovacic (Kramaric 90+6); Vlasic (Gvardiol 90+2), P. Sucic, Baturina (Mario Pasalic 68); Budimir (Matanovic 46)
■ Modric, Perisic

GOALS

0-1 After calculating his options, Nikola Vlasic passes to the overlapping Josip Stanisic, whose cross flies over everyone in the middle. The ball runs to Ivan Perisic at the far post and his fierce finish is impeccable.
1-1 Vlasic is deemed by VAR to have seriously grappled Renato Veiga at a corner. Portugal penalty, which Cristiano Ronaldo clips home straight down the middle.
2-1 Rafael Leao delivers a cross into the box from the left wing. Sandwiched between Josko Gvardiol and Marin Pongracic, Portugal sub Goncalo Ramos amazingly manages to outmuscle and outjump both, glancing in an outstanding header.

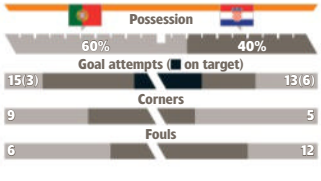
PORTUGAL EDGE EMOTIONAL ENCOUNTER

In an extraordinary encounter, where logic often seemed to play no part, these two sides served up a recipe for all football gourmets: remarkable reversals of fortune, unlimited drama, lashings of controversy (no fewer than four disallowed goals), both sides hitting the woodwork, a Portugal winner deep into time-added-on and the emotional goodbye of Croatia playmaking icon Luka Modric, for whom it was his last appearance on the World Cup stage. Right until the final whistle, the outcome was on a knife-edge, with the Croatians celebrating a Josko Gvardiol equaliser 13 minutes into stoppage time. Not so fast, retorted the VAR team, who, with the aid of snicko technology, ruled it out for offside.

"It was very bad refereeing. I'm not saying that VAR can't sometimes be a help, but it kills the emotions. These decisions take the joy out of football"
Croatia coach Zlatko Dalic

MATTER OF FACT

Incredibly, Cristiano Ronaldo's penalty was his first goal in a World Cup knockout match.



ROUND OF 32

FRIDAY, JULY 3, 4AM

SWITZERLAND (1) 2
(Embolo 10, Ndoye 46)

ALGERIA (0) 0

BC Place Vancouver Att: 52,497 Ref: Yael Falcon (Arg)

Engine-room controller...Granit Xhaka holds off Ibrahim Maza

SWITZERLAND Kobel – Zakaria (Widmer 87), Elvedi, Akanji, Rodriguez; Freuler, Xhaka; Ndoye (Aebischer 87), Manzambi (Okafor 71), Vargas (Rieder 71); Embolo (Amdouni 83)
ALGERIA Zidane – Belghali (Boulbina 82), Mandi, Bensebaini, Ait-Nouri; Zerrouki (Gouiri 58), Bentaleb (Boudaoui 71), Chaibi; Mahrez (Hadj Moussa 71), Maza, Aouar (Hadjam 58)
■ Chaibi, Boudaoui

GOALS

1-0 Too direct, strong and elusive for Algeria's defenders to stop, Switzerland starlet Johan Manzambi cuts a dash down the left wing, eventually hitting the by-line and squaring for Breel Embolo to tap in.

2-0 With right-back Denis Zakaria much to the fore as the Swiss press forward, the North Africans twice clumsily cough up the ball in and around their own box. The second of their mishit clearances is picked up by Dan Ndoye, who strokes it home.

SWISS CONTROL

Victorious in a World Cup knockout-round match for the first time since 1938, Switzerland were in cruise control all game against Algeria, the tone set by brilliant young attacking midfielder Johan Manzambi, engine-room controller and skipper Granit Xhaka – who was celebrating his 150th cap – and the busy Denis Zakaria, who was mightily impressive in an unfamiliar right-back role. Solid, structured and efficient, Murat Yakin's side can be bland at times. But in Manzambi, still only 20, they have someone to bring a much-needed shot of finesse and fantasy to proceedings. Algeria head coach Vladimir Petkovic, who was in charge of Switzerland for seven years between 2014 and 2021, would have been deeply disappointed with his team's anaemic display, not least the lack of attacking punch and sloppy defending.

"This was a performance of solidarity and maturity. We gave little away to our opponents and took our chances"
Switzerland coach Murat Yakin

MATTER OF FACT

Murat Yakin has never lost to Vladimir Petkovic in six Swiss League and international fixtures – three wins and three draws.

Possession	44.5%	55.5%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	11 (5)	8 (2)
Corners	4	2
Fouls	10	12

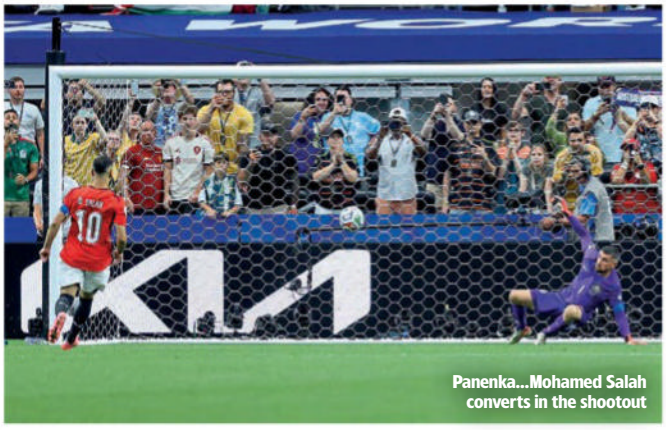
FRIDAY, JULY 3, 7PM

AUSTRALIA (0) 1
(Hany 55 og)

EGYPT (1) 1
(Ashour 13)

After Extra-Time; 1-1 at 90 mins; Egypt win 4-2 on penalties

Dallas Stadium Att: 70,244 Ref: Gustavo Tejera (Uru)



Panenka...Mohamed Salah converts in the shootout

AUSTRALIA Beach (Ryan 119) – Circati, Souttar, Herrington; Bos (Trewin 46), Irvine, O'Neill (Okon-Engstler 91), Behich; Volpato (Hrustic 74), Metcalfe (Mabil 91); Irankunda (Toure 74)
EGYPT Shobeir – Hany, Ibrahim, Rabia, Hafez (Trezeguet 80); Fathy (Abdelmaguid 67), Attia (Saber 120+1); Ashour, Salah, Marmoush (Abdelkarim 106); Zico (Hassan 67)
■ Hassan, Ibrahim

PENALTIES (Australia first)

Souttar	0-0	0-1	Saber
Irvine	1-1	1-2	Rabia
Mabil	2-2	2-3	Salah
Herrington	2-3	2-4	Abdelmaguid

GOALS

0-1 After Australia block an Emam Ashour effort from an indirect free-kick, the Egyptians recycle the ball out to Karim Hafez on the right, and his cross to the far post is headed in by Ashour.

1-1 Socceroos midfielder Aiden O'Neill whips in an excellent free-kick which a number of heads rise to meet, with the unfortunate Egypt defender Mohamed Hany only able to divert it into his own net.

PHARAOHS EDGE NERVY SHOOTOUT

A hard-fought nail-biter featuring two teams with certain flaws: an Egypt side that carried by far the most attacking intent – continually threatening but unable to turn their dominance into goals – and the gutsy, obdurate Socceroos, who proved unable to work up any sort of attacking rhythm. There was an inevitability to the long trek to a penalty showdown and only then did the drama finally kick in, Egypt successful with all their kicks – including a Mohamed Salah Panenka – while Socceroos substitute keeper Mathew Ryan, specifically brought on for his shootout expertise, made no difference at all. No wonder a tearful Salah and his team-mates were so emotional at the end. This was the Pharaohs' first-ever win in a World Cup knockout-round tie.

"We just felt that the experience of Maty [Ryan] would be the edge. In the end, it didn't work out that way. Egypt took really good penalties"
Australia coach Tony Popovic

MATTER OF FACT

Six of the players who started for Australia were 23 or younger, including 18-year-old defender Lucas Herrington who hit the crossbar in the penalty shootout.

Possession	42%	58%
Goal attempts (■ on target)	16 (1)	14 (3)
Corners	4	7
Fouls	12	14

FRIDAY, JULY 3, 11PM

ARGENTINA (1) 3
(Messi 29, Li. Martinez 92, Diney Borges 111 og)

CAPE VERDE (0) 2
(D. Duarte 59, S. Cabral 103)

After Extra-Time; 1-1 at 90 mins

Miami Stadium Att: 64,478 Ref: Drew Fischer (Can)

Heartbroken... Sidny Lopes Cabral

ARGENTINA E. Martinez – Molina (Montiel 104), Romero, Li. Martinez, Medina (Tagliafico 86); De Paul (Paredes 84), Mac Allister, Fernandez, Almada (Gonzalez 64); Messi; La. Martinez (Alvarez 63)
■ Montiel
CAPE VERDE Vozinha – Moreira, Pico Lopes, Diney Borges, S. Cabral; K. Pina (Benchimol 100); Mendes (W. Semedo 80), L. Duarte (Monteiro 67), D. Duarte (Y. Semedo 100), J. Cabral (Varela 80); Da Costa (Livramento 67)
■ K. Pina

GOALS

1-0 More genius from Lionel Messi, exquisitely controlling a Lisandro Martinez long ball with the outside of his boot, before firing it into the roof of the net.
1-1 Cape Verde make inroads along the right-hand channel, Ryan Mendes nutmegging an Argentine defender and Deroy Duarte firing in from an acute angle.
2-1 An Argentina corner is flicked on at the near post by the head of Alexis Mac Allister and runs right across the face of the goal. Lisandro Martinez collects and smashes home left-footed.
2-2 With apparently nothing on, Cape Verde left-back Sidny Lopes Cabral curls in one of the goals of the tournament, struck home with pace and accuracy with his right foot into the top corner.
3-2 Messi's delivery from a corner is headed in by Cristian Romero. It subsequently is deemed an own goal, the last touch coming off the arm of Cape Verde's Diney Borges.

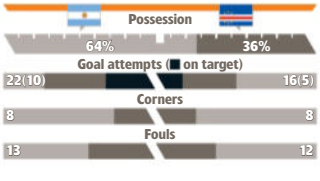
CAPE VERDE PUSH HOLDERS ALL THE WAY

It takes a lot to upstage Lionel Messi, but that's exactly what the minnows of Cape Verde achieved in this wonderfully entertaining clash, twice coming from behind to restore parity and giving the reigning world champions the fright of their lives. The never-daunted Blue Sharks, playing with an all-too-rare composure and confidence, even came close to a third equaliser in extra-time, a Sidny Lopes Cabral free-kick bringing out the best of Emi Martinez.

"The feeling in our dressing room is one of sadness. We got so, so close. My team showed that they have a soul"
Cape Verde coach Bubista

MATTER OF FACT

This was Argentina head coach Lionel Scaloni's 100th game in charge of *La Albiceleste*.



SATURDAY, JULY 4, 2.30AM

COLOMBIA (1) 1
(J. Arias 14)

GHANA (0) 0

Kansas City Stadium Att: 69,045 Ref: Clement Turpin (Fra)

Save after save... Lawrence Ati Zigi keeps out another Colombia shot

COLOMBIA Vargas – Munoz, Sanchez, Lucumi, Mojica; Puerta, Lerma, J. Arias (Quintero 73); James (Rios 46), Cordoba (Suarez 8), Diaz (Campaz 90)
■ Rios
GHANA Ati Zigi – Senaya (Seidu 13), Luckassen, Opoku, Mensah; Yirenkyi (Adu 79), Partey, Sibo (Owusu 62); Williams (Fatawu 62), Ayew (Nuamah 79), Semenyo
■ Yirenkyi, Fatawu, Seidu

GOALS

1-0 Only on the pitch for a few minutes, Colombian substitute striker Luis Suarez wastes no time making his presence felt, whipping in a great cross from the right flank to give midfielder Jhon Arias the simplest of tasks to prod home.

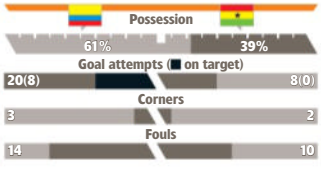
COLOMBIA CRUISE INTO THE ROUND OF 16

The most comfortable of victories for *Los Cafeteros*, who basically did as they pleased in Kansas City, inconvenienced only rarely by a mysteriously under-par Ghana. So impressive defensively in a goalless draw with England in the group stage, the Black Stars were not nearly as watertight at the back this time around and without the sterling efforts of goalkeeper Lawrence Ati Zigi, who made at least half-a-dozen good saves, the scoreline easily could have become a rout. As an offensive force, Carlos Queiroz's Ghana seemed to have applied the handbrake, their lack of attacking oomph symbolised by the zero in their shots on target column. In marked contrast to the West Africans, the Colombians created chances at will, though they had a tendency to run a hit-or-miss operation in the red zone. As usual, Bayern Munich forward Luis Diaz was the pick of the Colombian frontrunners, a constant menace with his speed and directness, while substitute striker Luis Suarez made an impact after coming on early for the injured Jhon Cordoba.

"This victory means a lot to us as this is a very difficult tournament. Different temperatures, schedules and travel plans. A new set of logistics for each game"
Colombia coach Nestor Lorenzo

MATTER OF FACT

This defeat was Ghana's fourth consecutive loss to South American opponents at the World Cup.



ROUND OF 16

SATURDAY, JULY 4, 6PM

CANADA (0) 0
MOROCCO (0) 3
(Ounahi 50, 82, Rahimi 90+8)

Houston Stadium Att: 68,777 Ref: Michael Oliver (Eng)

Another missed chance... Jonathan David shoots at Yassine Bounou

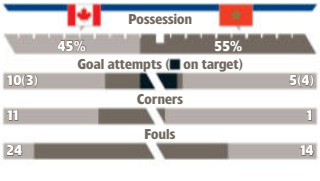
CANADA Crepeau – Johnston (Shaffelburg 78), Bombito, De Fougerolles, Laryea; Buchanan (Nelson 87), Sigur (Osorio 87), Eustaquio, Ahmed (P. David 78); J. David, Oluwaseyi (Larin 63)
■ Laryea, J. David, De Fougerolles, Larin
MOROCCO Bounou – Hakimi, Diop (Saadane 87), Halhal, Mazraoui; Bouaddi (Amrabat 63), El Aynaoui; Brahim, Ounahi (El Mourabet 87), El Khannouss (Talbi 63); Saibari (Rahimi 22)
■ El Khannouss, Hakimi, Halhal, Ounahi

GOALS
0-1 Morocco free-kick wide on the right. Instead of crossing into the box, Achraf Hakimi squares the ball to Azzedine Ounahi in the D. The right-footed first-time strike fizzes into the bottom-right corner past keeper Maxime Crepeau.
0-2 Morocco launch a blistering counter-attack led by Chemsdine Talbi, who duly hands over to Brahim Diaz. After befuddling a couple of Canadian defenders, Brahim cuts the ball inside to Ounahi whose finish is implacable.
0-3 The Atlas Lions break again, with Brahim intelligently feeding substitute Soufiane Rahimi, who comfortably slips the ball home.

CANADA SENT HOME
A brave, well-drilled and ferociously committed Canada, held the whip hand for a good three-quarters of this last-16 clash, often making the Moroccans look pedestrian. Sadly Jesse Marsch's side could not apply the killer blow, ultimately taught a lesson in football pragmatism by the street-wise Atlas Lions. So poor were the Moroccans in a bad-tempered first half that they barely ventured into the opposition box, much of that bluntness a result of star attacker Ismael Saibari going off injured early on. Canada's downfall was failing to cash in on their dynamic start to the game, a spell in which they posed Morocco all manner of problems with their high press and clever overloads, and eventually the North Africans' class told with some devastating counter-attacks.

"We totally controlled the match. But goals change games. I'd rather be us than them"
Canada coach Jesse Marsch

MATTER OF FACT
Canada talisman Alphonso Davies, still struggling with injury issues, was not used at all against Morocco, ending the World Cup with just 15 minutes of game time.



SATURDAY, JULY 4, 10PM

PARAGUAY (0) 0
FRANCE (0) 1
(Mbappe 70 pen)

Philadelphia Stadium Att: 68,324 Ref: Ilgiz Tantashev (Uzb)

Dark arts... Kylian Mbappe is pushed by Juan Jose Caceres

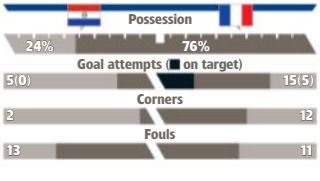
PARAGUAY Gill – Caceres, Velazquez, G. Gomez, Alderete (Canale 58), Alonso; Almiron (Avalos 71), D. Gomez (Mauricio 71), Cubas, Galarza; Enciso (Caballero 61)
FRANCE Maignan – Kounde, Upamecano, Saliba, Digne; Kone, Rabiot; Dembele (Cherki 84), Olise, Barcola (Doue 61); Mbappe
■ Barcola, Kone, Olise

GOALS
0-1 Cutting in from the left wing, France substitute Desire Doue smoothly skips past three Paraguay defenders before being felled by midfielder Diego Gomez. The referee points to the spot following a VAR intervention, and Kylian Mbappe converts after lengthy Paraguayan protests.

FRENCH MAGIC DEFEATS PARAGUAYAN DARK ARTS
The sweltering conditions in Philadelphia were not the only hellish element *Les Bleus* had to contend with en route to the quarter-finals. So used at this tournament to deploying their magnificent front four to stylishly triumph with a thousand-and-one swishes of the flashing blade, Didier Deschamps' charges had to adopt a more prosaic approach to see off the ultra-defensive Paraguayans. The South Americans, defiant and aggressive, gave the French attackers no room at all to work with and too macho for their own good, also indulged in the dark arts: cheap shots, trash talk, feigning injury, diving and even attempting to scuff up the penalty spot before Kylian Mbappe's decisive penalty kick. France, to their immense credit, mainly kept their cool. But the shenanigans hardly made for pleasant viewing, with Uzbekistan referee Ilgiz Tantashev seemingly unable to exert any sort of control. Hard to believe that not a single Paraguayan was booked, while three Frenchman were shown yellow cards.

"At the end of the game, I told the two biggest guys on our bench to go straight to Kylian [Mbappe] and protect him. I don't want to lose any player"
France coach Didier Deschamps

MATTER OF FACT
One for the infamy books. This was only the third time since 1966 that a World Cup knockout-round clash had failed to produce a first-half shot on target.



SUNDAY, JULY 5, 9PM

BRAZIL (0) 1
(Neymar pen 90+10)

NORWAY (0) 2
(Haaland 79, 90)

New York/New Jersey Stadium Att: 80,663 Ref: Ismail Elfath (USA)

Clincher...Haaland fires in his second

BRAZIL Alisson – Danilo, Marquinhos, Gabriel, Douglas Santos; Rayan (Danilo Santos 67), Bruno Guimaraes (Ederson Silva 79), Casemiro, Martinelli (Neymar 67); Matheus Cunha (Endrick 58), Vinicius Junior
■ Neymar
NORWAY Nyland – Ryerson (Aursnes 63), Ajer, Heggem, Moller Wolfe (Ostigard 90+5); Odegaard, Berge, Berg; Sorloth (Bobb 46), Haaland, Nusa (Schjelderup 46)

GOALS

0-1 Andreas Schjelderup, bright and lively off the bench, turns on the afterburners on the left wing. His sumptuous cross is headed in with brutal power by Erling Haaland, who completely outmuscles long-time foe Gabriel.
0-2 Brazil inexplicably stand off Haaland on the edge of the penalty area after he is set up by Schjelderup. The Manchester City striker nonchalantly plants a left-footed drive past Alisson.
1-2 Casemiro takes a stray elbow to the face during an aerial duel with substitute Leo Ostigard. Neymar rolls in the subsequent penalty after an unnecessary exchange of words with Norway goalkeeper Orjan Nyland.

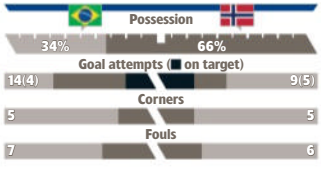
HAALAND SILENCES *SELECAO*

Flush with pride on reaching their first World Cup quarter-final, the Norwegians built this victory over a surprisingly unambitious Brazil on the gargantuan efforts of three Norsemen in particular: goalkeeper Orjan Nyland, whose string of exceptional saves kept his side in contention, goal machine Erling Haaland, inevitably on hand to supply the late killer blows, and substitute winger Andreas Schjelderup, whose introduction added much-needed pace and craft. Why Brazil spent most of the game in wait-and-see mode, sitting back and looking to hit on the break, will long remain a head-scratcher, as will the second-period deployment of an obviously far from fully-fit Neymar. Bruno Guimaraes, who missed a first-half penalty, was not the only guilty party in the *Selecao* ranks, a team minus *joie de vivre* and a functioning midfield.

"It's not the end. It's the start of a new cycle"
Brazil coach Carlo Ancelotti

MATTER OF FACT

This brace meant Norway's Erling Haaland had scored in each of his last 14 national-team outings.

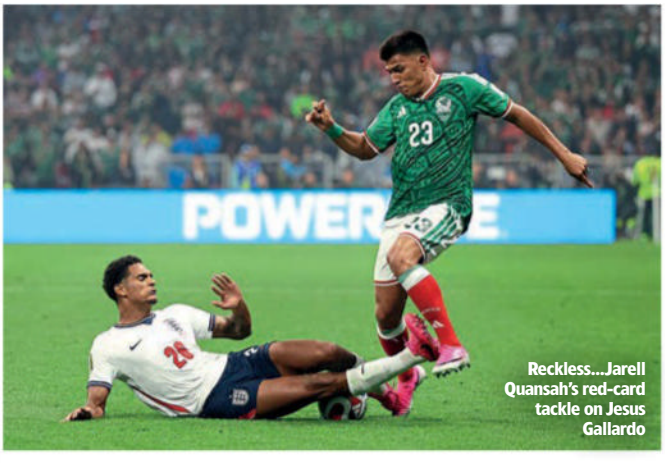


MONDAY, JULY 6, 2AM

MEXICO (1) 2
(Quinones 42, Jimenez 69 pen)

ENGLAND (2) 3
(Bellingham 36, 38, Kane 60 pen)

Azteca Stadium Att: 80,824 Ref: Alireza Faghani (Aus)



Reckless...Jarell Quansah's red-card tackle on Jesus Gallardo

MEXICO Rangel – Sanchez (Fidalgo 79), Montes (Alvarez 46), Vasquez, Gallardo; Lira; Mora (Gimenez 61), Romo (Gutierrez 61); Alvarado, Jimenez, Quinones (Martinez 81)
■ Sanchez, Vasquez
ENGLAND Pickford – Quansah, Konsa, Guehi, O'Reilly (Spence 74); Rice, Anderson (Burn 75); Saka (Stones 57), Bellingham, Gordon; Kane (Rogers 90)
■ Rice, Guehi, O'Reilly ■ Quansah

GOALS

0-1 A brilliant England move releases Bukayo Saka down the right, and his cross picks out Jude Bellingham who dives to head in.
0-2 Within seconds of the opener, Gilberto Mora loses the ball and England break swiftly. Harry Kane, as altruistic as ever, tees up Bellingham for the emphatic right-footed finish.
1-2 Some scrappy defending sees England fail to clear a free-kick and Julian Quinones lashes the ball into the roof of the net.
1-3 Stonewall penalty after Mexico keeper Raul Rangel brings down the livewire Anthony Gordon. Kane makes no mistake from the spot.
2-3 A Kane swipe makes contact in the box with Brian Gutierrez's foot. Penalty for Mexico – awarded after a VAR review – which Raul Jimenez tucks confidently away.

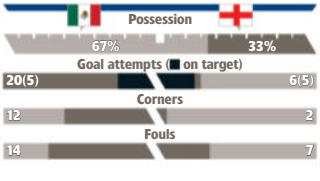
TEN-MAN ENGLAND CONQUER THE AZTECA

Over the course of his coaching career, England's Thomas Tuchel has forged a reputation for plotting against-the-odds victories, and the German had to do so again here as the Three Lions overcame a fired-up home team, a raucous, hostile crowd, and the thin-air altitude to roll into the quarter-finals. Jude Bellingham's stunning 98-second brace in the first half gave England vital breathing space and this cushion would prove extremely important. The gutsy hosts fought back and defender Jarrel Quansah was sent off on 54 minutes for a wild challenge, but England were not to be denied, their will-to-win shining through in the frantic, nerve-jangling final stages.

"The referees are just not good enough, the fourth officials are just not good enough"
England coach Thomas Tuchel

MATTER OF FACT

This was Mexico's first-ever defeat in a World Cup encounter at the Estadio Azteca, the end of a ten-game unbeaten run.



ROUND OF 16

MONDAY, JULY 6, 8PM

PORTUGAL (0) 0

SPAIN (0) 1
(Merino 90+1)

Dallas Stadium Att: 70,649 Ref: Anthony Taylor (Eng)

Clutch player...Mikel Merino slots the winner

PORTUGAL D. Costa – Cancelo (Dalot 71), Dias, Veiga, Mendes (Semedo 56); Vitinha (B. Silva 83), J. Neves; Neto (Conceicao 83), Fernandes, Felix (Leao 71); Ronaldo
■ B. Silva, Veiga
SPAIN Simon – Porro, Cubarsi, Laporte, Cucurella; Rodri, Pedri (Fabian 85); Yamal, Olmo (Merino 85), Baena (Ferran 75); Oyarzabal (Iglesias 90+7)
■ Ferran

GOALS

0-1 While Portugal contest the award of a Spanish free-kick, *La Roja* substitute Mikel Merino takes it quickly, slipping unnoticed into the box before receiving it back from Ferran Torres' astute reverse pass and slotting home with assurance and power.

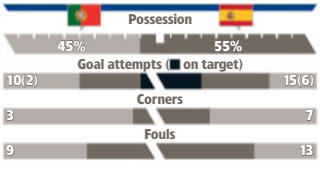
SUPERSUB MERINO SETTLES IBERIAN BATTLE

For the most part, this Iberian derby was a surprisingly poor game between two technically gifted teams who seemingly preferred chessboard caution to grabbing the initiative. Spain carved out the better chances in the opening 45 minutes, Mikel Oyarzabal wasting a gilt-edged opportunity early on and Portugal goalkeeper Diogo Costa thwarting Lamine Yamal and Alex Baena in quick succession. Yet it was Portugal who went closer still on 41 minutes, Nuno Mendes rattling the Spanish crossbar with a vicious shot from the edge of the penalty box, which deflected off the head of Spain right-back Pedro Porro. With final-third incursions continuing to be in short supply in the second half, extra-time and penalties very much looked on the cards until Mikel Merino, in typically clutch fashion, struck at the death. A sad, ineffectual end for the World Cup career of Portugal legend Cristiano Ronaldo.

"It's true that this is my last game with Portugal. I take with me a memory for a lifetime. It's important to have a new voice, a new leader"
Portugal coach Roberto Martinez

MATTER OF FACT

This result meant Spain's Luis de la Fuente had gone unbeaten in his first 12 major tournament (World Cup and European Championship) encounters, equalling the record of France's Aime Jacquet and the Netherlands' Louis van Gaal.

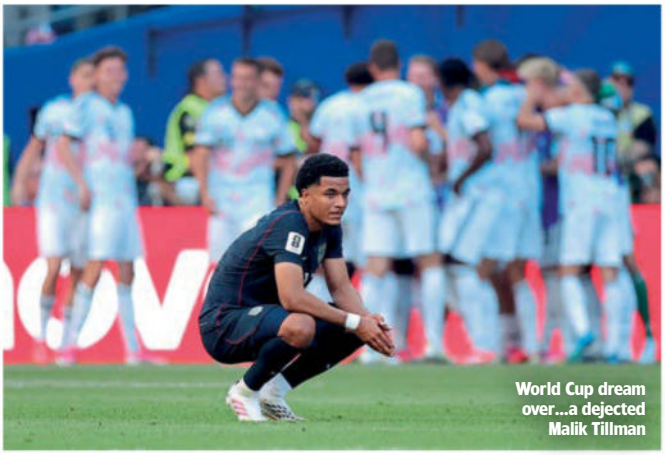


TUESDAY, JULY 7, 1AM

USA (1) 1
(Tillman 31)

BELGIUM (2) 4
(De Ketelaere 9, 33, Vanaken 57, Lukaku 90+3)

Seattle Stadium Att: 66,925 Ref: Adham Makhadmeh (Jor)



World Cup dream over...a dejected Malik Tillman

UNITED STATES Freese – Freeman, Richards, Ream, A. Robinson (Arfsten 90+2); McKennie, Adams (Pepi 72), Tillman; Dest (Reyna 46), Balogun (Wright 90+2), Pulisic (Berhalter 59)
■ McKennie, Tillman
BELGIUM Courtois – Castagne, Ngoy, Mechele, De Cuyper; Onana (Vanaken 21), Raskin (Witsel 89); Lukebakio (Doku 67), Tielemans, Trossard (Saelemaekers 89); De Ketelaere (Lukaku 67)

GOALS

0-1 A headed clearance from Alex Freeman falls to Nicolas Raskin, who, driving into the box, meets next to no resistance before crossing low for Charles De Ketelaere to easily convert.
1-1 Malik Tillman's free-kick takes a wicked deflection past a totally disorientated Thibaut Courtois.
1-2 Leandro Trossard whips in a superb cross from wide on the left. De Ketelaere outmuscles US skipper Tim Ream to nod in.
1-3 US custodian Matt Freese is all at sea on racing from his box to deal with a long ball. His pocket is picked, leaving Hans Vanaken to roll it home, albeit with the aid of Ream's hapless attempt to block.
1-4 US centre-back Chris Richards is uncommonly charitable when trying to clear. Romelu Lukaku fires in with a fierce diagonal, sparking jubilant celebrations.

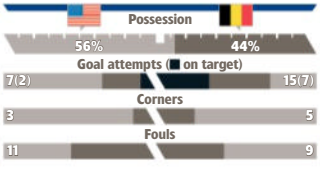
RUTHLESS BELGIANS END AMERICAN DREAM

In the wake of the controversial intervention to lift the red-card suspension of United States striker Folarin Balogun, Belgium's *Diables Rouges* showed exactly what they thought of this unsavoury affair, cruising to victory against a lethargic, mistake-ridden USA. Belgium head coach Rudi Garcia had the pundits in a frenzy when leaving midfield general Kevin De Bruyne and winger Jeremy Doku out of his starting XI. But all was to work out superbly for the Red Devils, in the ascendancy throughout thanks to their intense high press and fluent approach play. This was a day to forget for Team America, harmless in attack and catastrophic defensively.

"Everyone could see from the beginning that we did not connect with the game. We were never in it"
US coach Mauricio Pochettino

MATTER OF FACT

The United States have fallen at the last-16 stage in each of their last four World Cup appearances.



TUESDAY, JULY 7, 5PM

ARGENTINA (0) 3
(Romero 79, Messi 83, Fernandez 90+2)

EGYPT (1) 2
(Ibrahim 15, Zico 67)

Atlanta Stadium Att: 68,239 Ref: Francois Letexier (Fra)

Equaliser... Messi's shot goes in off the bar

ARGENTINA E. Martinez – Molina (Montiel 73), Romero (Otamendi 90+5), Li. Martinez, Tagliafico (Gonzalez 66); Paredes; De Paul (La. Martinez 66), Mac Allister, Fernandez; Messi, Alvarez (Medina 90+5)
EGYPT Shobeir – Hany, Ibrahim, Rabia, Hafez; Hassan (Trezeguet 73), Lashin (Zizo 90+6), Attia, Ashour (Fathy 46); Salah, Zico (Marmoush 80)
■ Shobeir, Fathy, Attia, Hassan

GOALS

0-1 Following an Egypt corner, the ball is worked back to Marawan Attia, whose cross into the box is headed in by Yasser Ibrahim.

0-2 Mo Salah leads the breakout, eventually feeding Haissem Hassan, who skips past opposition full-back Nahuel Molina before providing the cut-back back for Mostafa Zico to apply the finishing touch.

1-2 Lionel Messi clips the ball into the Egypt area from the right. Cristian Romero nods home via Mostafa Shobeir's flailing fingers.

2-2 Lautaro Martinez hooks the ball back into the danger zone following another Messi cross. Julian Alvarez tees up Messi to lash in the equaliser off the underside of the crossbar.

3-2 Argentina launch a counter. Alvarez spreads it wide for Lautaro Martinez on the right. The cross is headed in by Enzo Fernandez.

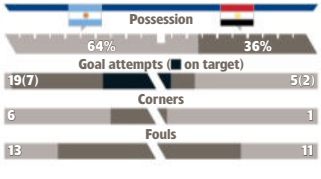
"VARGENTINA" STUN EGYPT

Argentina's seemingly unbreakable spirit again came to the fore as the reigning world champions rose from the dead, turning a two-goal deficit into a thrilling, improbable victory. Argentina, for whom Leo Messi had a first-half penalty saved, created precious little for much of the game. But, refusing to lie down, pulled off a *remontada* for the ages. Egypt, buoyed by a stellar performance by goalkeeper Mostafa Shobeir, will forever claim that the key decisions in the game went against them, particularly their disallowed goal and when Mo Salah was denied a penalty shout in stoppage time, Argentina immediately breaking up field for the knife-twisting winner.

"What happened to us wasn't fair. We should have had a penalty, and had a goal disallowed. It's a defeat which feels unjust"
Egypt coach Hossam Hassan

MATTER OF FACT

Lionel Messi is the only player in World Cup history to miss two penalties (not including shootouts) during the same tournament.



TUESDAY, JULY 7, 9PM

SWITZERLAND (0) 0

COLOMBIA (0) 0

After Extra-Time; 0-0 at 90 mins; Switzerland win 4-3 on penalties

BC Place Vancouver Att: 52,497 Ref: Ivan Barton (Slv)

Wasteful... Jaminton Campaz

SWITZERLAND Kobel – Zakaria (Widmer 87), Elvedi, Akanji, Rodriguez (Muheim 71); Freuler, Xhaka; Rieder (Amdouni 103), Jashari (Sow 46), Ndoye (Vargas 90+2); Embolo (Itten 87)
■ Xhaka, Zakaria, Muheim
COLOMBIA Vargas – Munoz, Sanchez, Lucumi (Mina 119), Mojica; J. Arias (Campaz 66), Lerma (Rios 82), Puerta, Diaz; James (Quintero 66); Suarez (Hernandez 82),
■ Suarez, Sanchez

PENALTIES (Colombia first)

Xhaka	1-1	0-1	Quintero
Amdouni	2-1	1-1	Sanchez
Akanji	2-2	2-2	Campaz
Itten	3-2	2-2	Hernandez
Vargas	4-3	3-3	Diaz

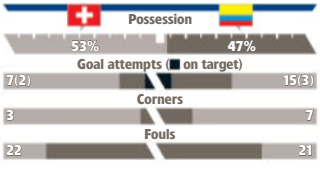
SWISS EDGE COLOMBIANS IN TENSE SHOOTOUT

This European-South American face-off, dubbed "The Clash of Chocolate and Coffee", proved to be not remotely as delicious, the opening 90 minutes a largely dull affair dictated by watertight defences and stolid, unimaginative attacking play. Only in extra-time did emotions in Vancouver receive a much-needed workout, with Colombia centre-back Jhon Lucumi heading against the crossbar, Swiss substitute Zeki Amdouni going close and *Los Cafeteros* substitute Jaminton Campaz wastefully shooting over after a Granit Xhaka error. Colombia hot-shot Luis Diaz, not quite as effective as he had shown with Bayern Munich this past campaign, also had a half-decent chance, but saw his shot blocked in extremis by Silvan Widmer. The penalty shootout was as tightly contested as the game itself, Davinson Sanchez and Manuel Akanji exchanging misses prior to Switzerland goalkeeper Gregor Kobel springing to his right to repel Cucho Hernandez's effort. That was the moment the balance tilted in Switzerland's favour and so it remained, both Cedric Itten and Ruben Vargas keeping their cool to put the Alpine nation into the quarter-finals.

"We had to give our all in this incredible fight. We also had to play with patience and intelligence. I can't describe how good I felt when the winning penalty went in"
Switzerland coach Murat Yakin

MATTER OF FACT

This victory ensured Switzerland's first World Cup quarter-final appearance since 1954.



QUARTER-FINALS

THURSDAY, JULY 9, 9PM

FRANCE (0) 2
(Mbappe 60, Dembele 66)

MOROCCO (0) 0

Boston Stadium Att: 63,811 Ref: Facundo Tello (Arg)

Clincher...Dembele adds France's second

FRANCE Maignan – Kounde (Gusto 87), Upamecano, Saliba, Digne; Kone (Zaire-Emery 71), Rabiot; Dembele, Olise, Doue (Barcola 77); Mbappe (Mateta 77)
MOROCCO Bounou – Hakimi, Diop, Mazraoui, Salah-Eddine (El Ouahdi 74); Bouaddi (Amrabat 62), El Aynaoui; Brahim (Yassine 74), Ounahi, Talbi (Sbai 85); El Khannouss (Rahimi 62)
Diop

GOALS

1-0 Desire Doue plays in Kylian Mbappe on the left of the Moroccan penalty box. The France skipper performs his magic, brilliantly curling a potent side-footer around defender Issa Diop and into the far corner.
2-0 Ousmane Dembele sets off through the middle of the Moroccan defence. On reaching the D, he sends a low drive past Atlas Lions goalkeeper Yassine Bounou, who gets his fingertips to the ball but cannot keep it out.

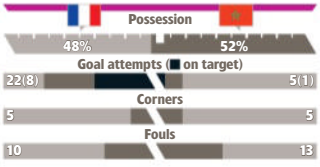
MBAPPE AND DEMBELE TOO GOOD FOR MOROCCO

As France strolled to their third consecutive World Cup semi-final, Kylian Mbappe once again proved to be the centre of all attention, having a weak first-half penalty comfortably saved by Yassine Bounou, opening the scoring with the most exceptional of out-of-nothing strikes, excellent in his decoy runs and generally the ultra-relaxed epitome of a remarkably serene team, one certain of their strengths. Facing a surprisingly inert and submissive Morocco, *Les Bleus* should have been home and hosed at half-time, the near-misses including a smart Bounou stop from a point-blank Dayot Upamecano header, the Moroccan keeper blocking a Desire Doue shot and Lucas Digne clipping the crossbar with a long-distance drive.

"Opponents know we're dangerous in many different areas and are looking to limit those threats. However, the danger comes from everywhere. And when we don't have the ball, we're defending better and better"
France coach Didier Deschamps

MATTER OF FACT

In seven head-to-heads against France the Moroccans have yet to win in regulation time, registering five defeats and two draws, albeit managing to win one via a penalty shootout back in 1998.



FRIDAY, JULY 10, 8PM

SPAIN (1) 2
(Fabian 30, Merino 88)

BELGIUM (1) 1
(De Ketelaere 41)

Los Angeles Stadium Att: 70,492 Ref: Michael Oliver (Eng)

Decisive...Senne Lammens spills the ball to Merino

SPAIN Simon – Porro, Cubarsi, Laporte, Cucurella; Rodri, Fabian (Pedri 55); Yamal, Olmo (Merino 86), Baena (Ferran 55); Oyarzabal (Williams 79)
Cubarsi, Laporte
BELGIUM Courtois (Lammens 71) – Castagne, Ngoy, Mechele, De Cuyper (Seys 61); Vanaken (Lukaku 60), Raskin; Trossard (Witsel 60), De Bruyne (Saelemaekers 86), Doku; De Ketelaere
De Bruyne, Witsel

GOALS

1-0 A slick one-two between Lamine Yamal and Pedro Porro results in the latter cutting the ball back for Dani Olmo, whose effort is parried by Thibaut Courtois. Fabian Ruiz dispatches the rebound.
1-1 Following some excellent ball-retention on the right by Belgium, Timothy Castagne delivers adroitly into the box. Charles De Ketelaere gets ahead of Pau Cubarsi to glance in the leveller.
2-1 Belgium's substitute goalkeeper Senne Lammens makes a hash of saving Cubarsi's shot from distance. Sub Mikel Merino pounces on the gift.

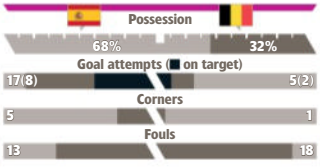
MERINO DELIVERS AGAIN

Spain's patented supersub Mikel Merino – who came off the bench in the previous round to net the only goal of the game against Portugal and pulled off the same ice-breaking trick in a quarter-final victory over Germany at Euro 2024 – was in repeat mode in LA, on target with a late winner just 117 seconds after entering the fray. Through to the last four of a World Cup for only the third time, Spain fully deserved the victory against a much-improved and resilient Belgium, though *La Roja* boss Luis de la Fuente would not have appreciated his side's scarcity of clear-cut chances. Tough luck for Belgium, whose hopes of pulling off an upset were dealt a blow when captain Youri Tielemans was injured in the warm-up, and went further south when keeper Thibaut Courtois had to leave the field through injury on 71 minutes.

"The character we show is the same in every situation. I can't say enough how proud I am to lead a group which wants to grow and improve like this one"
Spain coach Luis de la Fuente

MATTER OF FACT

Following this victory, Luis de la Fuente's 47 games in charge of Spain had seen 23 of the team's 132 goals scored by substitutes.



SATURDAY, JULY 11, 10PM

NORWAY (1) 1
(Schjelderup 36)

ENGLAND (1) 2
(Bellingham 45+2, 93)

After Extra-Time; 1-1 at 90 mins

Miami Stadium Att: 64,478 Ref: Clement Turpin (Fra)

Man of the moment...Jude Bellingham

NORWAY Nyland – Ryerson (Aursnes 60), Ajer, Heggem (Ostigard 91), Moller Wolfe (Holmgren Pedersen 90); Odegaard, Berge, Berg; Sorloth (Bobb 68), Haaland (Strand Larsen 106), Schjelderup (Nusa 68)
■ Ajer

ENGLAND Pickford – Konsa (Rogers 89), Stones, Guehi, O'Reilly (Spence 86); Rice (Eze 46), Anderson; Madueke (Saka 46), Bellingham (Burn 111), Gordon (James 71); Kane

GOALS

1-0 Patrick Berg dispossesses Harry Kane near the centre-circle. While England claim a foul, Martin Odegaard spreads the ball wide on the left to Andreas Schjelderup, whose dipping cross-cum-shot spectacularly beats Jordan Pickford.

1-1 Great move-initiating work on the left by Elliot Anderson and Anthony Gordon sets up Jude Bellingham on the edge of the box. The Real Madrid man's first touch is perfect as is the cross-shot he thumps home with his left foot.

1-2 Morgan Rogers lets fly from distance. Norway keeper Orjan Nyland inexplicably allows the ball to squirm from his grasp, allowing Bellingham to slide in and convert.

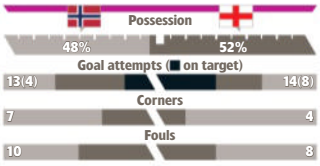
BELLINGHAM DOES IT AGAIN

Not for the first time in this tournament, England rode their luck somewhat as they came from behind to secure only their fourth spot in a World Cup semi-final. Skittish at times defensively and too inclined to rely on unproductive square balls, the Three Lions were not at their best by any means. But to their immense credit, they found a way to win, a victory built on a steely mentality, the ability to rise to the occasion in key moments and, of course, the talismanic goalscoring prowess of Jude Bellingham. Norway, for whom star striker Erling Haaland cut an unusually subdued figure, arguably had the better of the second half, a Torbjorn Heggem goal ruled out for a Haaland push on Elliot Anderson at a corner and Kristoffer Ajer heading against the crossbar.

"We made life very, very difficult for ourselves today. I'm not happy with the performance... sloppy...a lot of technical mistakes...not fast enough"
England coach Thomas Tuchel

MATTER OF FACT

Norway and England now have met five times in World Cup action (qualifiers or finals), with two wins apiece and a draw.



SUNDAY, JULY 12, 2AM

ARGENTINA (1) 3
(Mac Allister 10, Alvarez 112, La. Martinez 120+1)

SWITZERLAND (0) 1
(Ndoye 67)

After Extra-Time; 1-1 at 90 mins

Kansas City Stadium Att: 69,045 Ref: Joao Pinheiro (Por)

Dismayed...Breel Embolo is sent off

ARGENTINA E. Martinez – Molina (Montiel 85), Romero (Otamendi 106), Li. Martinez, Tagliafico (Gonzalez 78); Paredes (Lopez 110); De Paul (La. Martinez 85), Fernandez (Almada 91), Mac Allister; Messi; Alvarez
■ Almada, La. Martinez, Lopez

SWITZERLAND Kobel – Zakaria (Jashari 96), Elvedi, Akanji, Rodriguez (Comert 90+5); Freuler (Vargas 115), Xhaka; Sow (Widmer 86), Rieder (Muheim 86), Ndoye (Amdouni 86); Embolo
■ Embolo ■ Embolo

GOALS

1-0 Argentina midfielder Alexis Mac Allister jumps brilliantly amid a forest of giant Swiss defenders to glance in Lionel Messi's corner at the near post.

1-1 Dan Ndoye plays a clever one-two with Ricardo Rodriguez in the inside-left channel and tucks away the finish through the legs of *Albiceleste* keeper Emi Martinez.

2-1 Argentina substitute Jose Manuel "Flaco" Lopez lays the ball back to Julian Alvarez on the edge of the Swiss penalty area and the little man produces a moment of pure class, sending a stunning, unstoppable curler into the top-right corner.

3-1 Lautaro Martinez begins the three-on-one break before passing to Thiago Almada, whose effort is blocked by Swiss goalie Gregor Kobel. The ball rebounds to Lautaro, who can't miss.

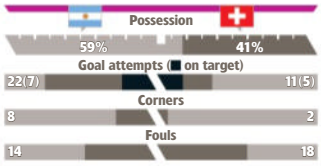
RED CARD TURNS TIDE IN ARGENTINA'S FAVOUR

What a pity that all Switzerland's hard work was undone midway through the second half by the unnecessary dismissal of striker Breel Embolo, who in the wake of a VAR "mistaken identity" review was deemed to have taken a dive, thus earning a second, fatal yellow card. Until that point, the Swiss had looked the sharpest and with Dan Ndoye equalising just five minutes earlier, all the vital momentum belonged to them. Embolo's exit changed the entire dynamic of the game and though Murat Yakin's side bravely resisted well into extra-time, the mounting pressure from Messi et al. finally took its toll.

"We were far better than our opponents. Even down to ten we battled. I'm so unbelievably proud of my team. It's a shame we had to go out this way"
Switzerland coach Murat Yakin

MATTER OF FACT

Messi is the first player in World Cup history to register ten assists.



SEMI-FINALS

TUESDAY, JULY 14, 8PM

FRANCE (0) 0

SPAIN (1) 2
(Oyarzabal 22 pen, Porro 58)

Dallas Stadium Att: 70,176 Ref: Ivan Barton (Slv)

Captains' tussle... Mbappe and Rodri compete for the ball

FRANCE Maignan – Kounde, Upamecano, Saliba (Lacroix 30), Digne (T. Hernandez 72); Tchouameni, Rabiot (Kone 46); Dembele, Olise (Cherki 72), Barcola (Doue 57); Mbappe
■ Rabiot, Mbappe
SPAIN Simon – Porro (Llorente 84), Cubarsi, Laporte, Cucurella; Rodri, Fabian (Pedri 78); Yamal, Olmo (Merino 78), Baena (Williams 84); Oyarzabal (Ferran 74)
■ Cucurella

GOALS

0-1 After misjudging a headed clearance, France left-back Lucas Digne spins around to clear again, blissfully unaware of Lamine Yamal arriving at his back. Digne misses the ball and catches Yamal with his boot. A clear penalty, which Mikel Oyarzabal firmly dispatches.
0-2 After a spell of keep-ball in French territory, Spain full-back Pedro Porro plays a delightful wall-pass with Dani Olmo, advances on goal and expertly side-foots it into the bottom-right corner.

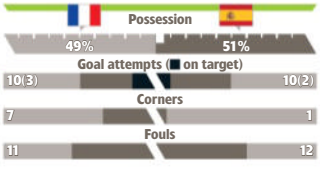
SPAIN KNOCK FRENCH EXPRESS OFF THE TRACKS

No third consecutive World Cup final for tournament favourites France. No fireworks whatsoever from their much-vaunted ensemble of attackers. In a highly impressive display of total control, Spain took the high road to their second WC final, outthinking, outmanoeuvring and outclassing a side that many had deemed unbeatable. The French no doubt will point to the destabilising effect of centre-back William Saliba exiting the action with a back injury after half an hour, but that hardly explains everything else that went catastrophically wrong. *La Roja* were the masters of this game, dictating the tempo, much better in their ball-retention and absolutely dominant in midfield, where France's Adrien Rabiot and Aurelien Tchouameni were overrun. Without the ball, Kylian Mbappe, Ousmane Dembele and Michael Olise only had scraps to feed on.

"The players deserve everything. Day after day, they've shown their commitment, their solidarity, their generosity, their talent. They make the difficult look easy"
Spain coach Luis de la Fuente

MATTER OF FACT

Spain are only the second team (along with Germany) to defeat France in a World Cup knockout-round tie – not including the final match itself – since 1958.

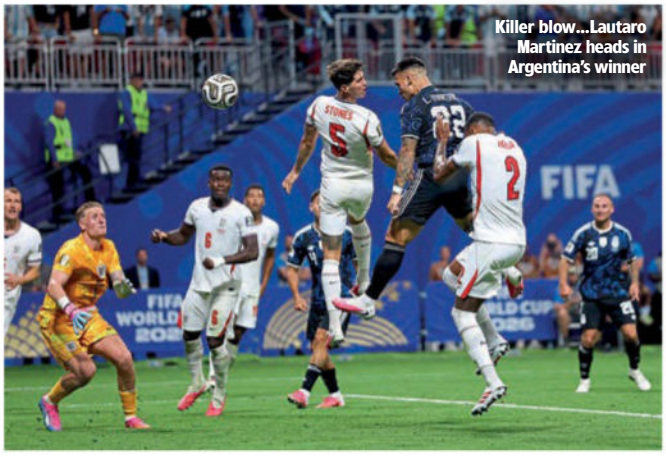


WEDNESDAY, JULY 15, 8PM

ENGLAND (0) 1
(Gordon 55)

ARGENTINA (0) 2
(Fernandez 85, La. Martinez 90+2)

Atlanta Stadium Att: 68,239 Ismail Elfath (USA)



Killer blow...Lautaro Martinez heads in Argentina's winner

ENGLAND Pickford – James (Burn 82), Stones (Toney 90+6), Guehi, Spence (Rashford 90+6); Rice (O'Reilly 82), Anderson; Rogers, Bellingham, Gordon (Konsa 72); Kane
■ Anderson
ARGENTINA E. Martinez – Molina (Montiel 72), Romero, Li. Martinez (Otamendi 73), Tagliafico (La. Martinez 81); Paredes (Gonzalez 64); Simeone (De Paul 72), Fernandez, Mac Allister, Alvarez; Messi
■ Li. Martinez, Romero, De Paul

GOALS

1-0 Declan Rice plays in Morgan Rogers, whose cross is side-footed home at the back post by Anthony Gordon, quicker and more alert than his marker Nahuel Molina.
1-1 Lionel Messi takes a short corner, receives it back, then passes inside to Enzo Fernandez, totally free of attention 25 yards out. The finish is outstanding, lashed in forcefully with a touch of top-spin.
1-2 Alexis Mac Allister hits the post with a well-struck low drive. Messi retrieves on the right and after skipping past two England defenders, whips in a super right-footed cross. Lautaro Martinez leaps masterfully to head home.

MEEK ENGLAND SURRENDER TO MESSI MAGIC

Fuelled by their irrepressible willpower and the evergreen Leo Messi, Argentina once again were resplendent in their fightback fatigues, turning the tables on England with an all-action half-hour of ever-increasing pressure. The Three Lions will long be haunted by the concluding acts, with the safety-first substitutions of Thomas Tuchel leaving them woefully prepared to face up to the Argentine attacks. After taking the lead early in the second half, England very much had the whip hand, only to almost immediately surrender it, sitting deeper and deeper in defence – maintaining just 12% possession between their opener and Argentina's eventual winner –and inviting the *Albiceleste* to lay siege to their goal. With England pinned in their own box and Messi free to conjure his magic on the right wing, Tuchel's defensive dam inevitably burst.

"This group never know when they are beaten. We are unique. It's not arrogance, it's all heart"
Argentina coach Lionel Scaloni

MATTER OF FACT

Argentina have won all six of their World Cup semi-finals (1978, 1986, 1990, 2014, 2022 and 2026).

FINAL

SUNDAY, JULY 19, 8PM

SPAIN (0) 1
(Ferran 106)

ARGENTINA (0) 0

After Extra-Time; 0-0 at 90 mins

New York/New Jersey Stadium Att: 80,663 Ref: Slavko Vincic (Svn)

Winning goal...Ferran Torres lashes the ball into the Argentina net

SPAIN Simon – Porro, Cubarsi, Laporte (E. Garcia 99), Cucurella; Rodri (Zubimendi 99), Fabian (Pedri 62); Yamal, Olmo (Merino 75), Baena (Williams 75); Oyarzabal (Ferran 62)
ARGENTINA E. Martinez – Montiel (Molina 58), Romero (Medina 70), Li. Martinez (Otamendi 44), Tagliafico; De Paul (Simeone 70), Fernandez, Mac Allister, Gonzalez (Paredes 46); Messi, Alvarez (Senesi 102)
■ Li. Martinez, Paredes, Romero, Fernandez, Mac Allister ■ Fernandez

GOALS

1-0 Pedro Porro crosses deep to the far stick. Substitute Nico Williams has the awareness to nod it inside for Ferran Torres to thrash in left-footed.

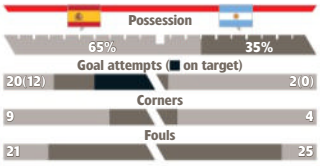
CULTURED SPAIN BEAT FEISTY ARGENTINA

Spain, never behind at any point in the tournament and conceding just once in eight fixtures, deservedly became only the second European nation to win a World Cup in the Americas. This clash of styles, Spain's cultured passing game versus the heart and commitment of Argentina, was a checkmate affair doomed to require extra-time. While *La Roja*, with Rodri pulling the strings, always looked to keep the initiative and create, the sole preoccupation of their opponents was to ferociously defend their box. So negative were the *Albiceleste* that they did not have a shot at goal until the 117th minute, only exiting their bricked-up fortress on going behind to supersub Ferran Torres' strike. Argentina talisman Lionel Messi offered little on the day and even when a late, late chance did fall to Lionel Scaloni's side, sub Giuliano Simeone lashed it over the crossbar. Spain bit by bit wore the Argentines down with the footballing equivalent of death by a thousand paper cuts: the flawless possession, intelligent movement and total control. Top marks to Argentina keeper Emi Martinez for postponing the inevitable for as long as he did, sterling efforts in marked contrast to the poor discipline of certain team-mates, not least Enzo Fernandez, whose dismissal late in normal time proved the final nail in the coffin. The unsavoury scenes at the end just made it all the uglier.

"The match should have been decided much earlier, but this is a World Cup final and you have to dig deep...even against ten men. We were prepared for anything"
Spain coach Luis de la Fuente

MATTER OF FACT

This was Argentina's first defeat in an international knockout-round tie since the 2019 Copa America.



3RD PLACE PLAY-OFF

SATURDAY, JULY 18, 10PM

FRANCE (0) 4
(Mbappe 48, 66, Barcola 54, Dembele 90+6)

ENGLAND (4) 6
(Rice 3, Konsa 18, Saka 37, 45+1, 87 pen, Bellingham 90+8)

Miami Stadium Att: 64,478 Ref: Jesus Valenzuela (Ven)

FRANCE Maignan – Gusto (Kounde 90+1), Konate (Upamecano 46), Lacroix, T. Hernandez (Digne 46); Zaire-Emery, Rabiot; Olise, Cherki (Dembele 46), Doue (Barcola 46); Mbappe
ENGLAND D. Henderson – Quansah (James 83), Konsa, Guehi (Chalobah 90+3), Spence; Rice; Saka, Rogers, Eze (Bellingham 79), Rashford (Watkins 46); Toney (Anderson 79)

GOALS

0-1 Declan Rice intercepts the ball and then drills it past Mike Maignan from long range.
0-2 Ezri Konsa out-jumps Adrien Rabiot to head in a Rice corner.
0-3 Following action galore in the France box, Marcus Rashford sets up Bukayo Saka to swipe home.
0-4 Eberechi Eze with a neat turn and slide-rule pass. Saka coolly applies the finishing touch.
1-4 Michael Olise plays in Kylian Mbappe. The skipper's left foot does the rest, finishing impudently across keeper Dean Henderson.
2-4 France substitute Bradley Barcola scampers through to further reduce the arrears.
3-4 Creative genius Olise, with a dummy and one-two, provides the platform for Mbappe to fire in.
3-5 Malo Gusto fouls the raiding Djed Spence for a clear penalty. Saka completes his hat-trick.
4-5 Ousmane Dembele, cutting in from the right, whips the ball in.
4-6 Jude Bellingham's jinking solo run ends with the *coup de grace*.

Record breaker ...Mbappe scores his 22nd World Cup goal

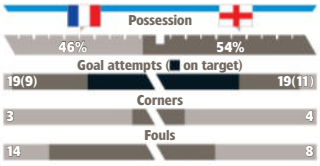
MBAPPE SETS NEW RECORD IN GOAL-FEST

With the pressure off and second-stringers looking to make an impact, the goals flowed in an extraordinary topsy-turvy game in Miami. Not bad for a fixture that nobody apparently wanted to play in. To England, the bronze medal, their best World Cup performance since 1966. For the French, a degree of salvaged pride after a catastrophic opening 45.

"Not sure if we had more control. We just had fresher legs and quality players again"
England coach Thomas Tuchel

MATTER OF FACT

This was the first time that France had conceded four goals in a first half since 1968.



Henry WINTER
THE VOICE OF FOOTBALL

Jude Bellingham: England's next captain

England's future captain...Jude Bellingham

Jude Bellingham should be the next captain of England. He's not just established in the team for the next decade, he's embedded in it. The strength of his character and his abilities make him absolutely essential.

At just 23 years old he's already passed 50 caps and played at four major international tournaments. He's respected by team-mates and feared by opponents. Above all, the Real Madrid man possesses an intense winning mindset that should set the tone in the England dressing room. If England are to recover from their collapse against Argentina in Atlanta they need to embrace fully Bellingham's power.

Thomas Tuchel doesn't appear to know how to harness and enhance Bellingham's formidable powers for the good of the team. Bellingham is England's future far more than Tuchel is. He's already the protector of the dressing-room. I loved Bellingham's honesty and loyalty to team-mates when responding to Tuchel's comments about the players needing to improve after squeezing past Norway in the quarter-finals.

I loved his anger and defiance when England lost to Argentina in such enraging circumstances at the Atlanta Stadium. I didn't have a problem when he put a stroppy Argentinian bench-warmer, Valentin Barco, in his place as the players milled around on the pitch and emotions ran wild after the final whistle.

After that game, I met a friend for a (soft) drink at a downtown hotel. It was a FIFA hotel, full of corporates, but also heaving with long-standing England fans fuming at the years of hurt stretching past 60. We're actually the worst age to be England fans: too young to remember 1966, but old enough to endure all the barren '70s, heartache '80s, '90s, noughties and then, from 2018, all the hope that kills you. That's another reason why Atlanta cut so deep. The England fans I spoke to in the bar were especially seething as Tuchel squandered an opportunity to end the years of hurt with his confusing subs.

I noticed the musician setting up near the bar. He wore a T-shirt with Bellingham's likeness and the familiar words and lyrics "Hey Jude". Bellingham is the man to take a sad song and make it better. He's embedded in all facets of England life, from congregations in many-starred hotels to the fans dipping into the Beatles' songbook to chorus his name at the lively

Metro bar 100 yards away the night before. Bellingham is the new England, and should be the new leader after Harry Kane.

There's not a vacancy yet. The armband remains wrapped around Kane's left bicep. Now 33, England's record-breaking scorer is fit enough and impactful enough to continue to lead the line and lead the team into Euro 2028. But when he does stand down, Bellingham is the ideal candidate to step up. Declan Rice will have his champions, especially when he succeeds Martin Odegaard as Arsenal's skipper. Marc Guehi is a quiet leader at the back. But appointing Bellingham would send a message of English ambition.

His critics question his temperament, citing occasional bouts of petulance, when it's simply frustration at expectations not being met. He's been a setter of standards from his teenage years, walking into the Birmingham City changing room at just 16, stepping into the skirmishing of a Championship midfield, striding into Borussia Dortmund, and winning, and then Real Madrid and winning. Broadcasters who interview Bellingham regularly (he avoids print) talk of a polite, fun, thoughtful interviewee, a credit to the parenting of Denise and Mark in Stourbridge and beyond.

Whether Tuchel is still head coach whenever Bellingham takes the armband is a moot point. Last summer Tuchel apologised for his "repulsive" remark about the midfielder, but his treatment of Bellingham is simply weird. He resembles a father slightly in awe of his talented son, concerned by his precocity, fearing his popularity.

It's tempting to play the amateur psychologist. Is Bellingham the stellar player that Tuchel wished he'd been? Yet managers who weren't great players often prove brilliant mentors and motivators of the very best. Their names are known and admired: Arrigo Sacchi with Milan, Sir Alex Ferguson with Manchester United, Arsene Wenger with Arsenal and Jose Mourinho with Chelsea. Each inspired their players.

Complicated relationship... Bellingham and Tuchel

Jude Bellingham is England's future far more than Thomas Tuchel is...He is the new England, and should be the new leader after Harry Kane

Tuchel should be admiring Bellingham's hunger and using it as the fuel for England's fire. Tuchel should be working with England's best performer in a World Cup, arguably since the 1966 generation of Bobby Moore and Bobby Charlton played at the 1970 World Cup. I'd put Bellingham above even Gary Lineker holding off Emilio Butragueno, Careca and Diego Maradona to win the Golden Boot in 1986; or Paul Gascoigne's swashbuckling play at 1990; and Ashley Cole's defensive masterclasses in 2002 and 2006. Tuchel should be embracing Bellingham not constantly challenging him, even at times sounding reluctant to praise him.

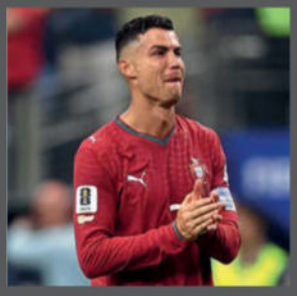
Then there is the even stranger case of England's most creative defender, Trent Alexander-Arnold, being overlooked by Tuchel. He's very close to Bellingham, his Real Madrid team-mate. Some supporters believe Tuchel simply wanted to split up their double-act friendship which was actually a positive feature of past camps.

Tuchel has work to do to rebuild his reputation. And he needs to do it by properly appreciating Bellingham, England's future captain.

5 THINGS WE LEARNED...

1 STOP THE STUTTER
It's infuriating to see good players persist with stuttering penalties and get caught out by goalkeepers. The aim is to commit the keeper and then place the ball the other way, but even great players like Kylian Mbappe failed with that technique. Harry Kane was denied by Dominik Livakovic of Croatia, although it was retaken. Bruno Guimaraes and Jorgen Strand Larsen also missed off stutters, contributing to a third of such penalties squandered.

2 HOLD OFF ON NEW CONTRACTS
England's head coach Thomas Tuchel received two extra years in advance of the World Cup but failed to deliver, even if he did meet stipulated targets. Steve Clarke resigned a month after agreeing a four-year contract extension following Scotland's tame exit. Brazil are stuck with Carlo Ancelotti until 2030 despite a disappointing campaign. Managers' contracts should run from tournament to tournament. If they do well, a renegotiation can occur. If they do poorly, there's the door.



Still playing at 41...Cristiano Ronaldo

3 KNOW WHEN TO GO
Eight players over the age of 40 were at the World Cup, with mixed results. Cristiano Ronaldo stayed on too long and Portugal, barring a moment or two, did not benefit from his presence. Luka Modric, 40, was still an influence for Croatia, if not the force of old. And so to the great 39-year-old Lionel Messi, who showed you could apply yourself at the highest level in advanced years, and that the old ones could be the best.

4 FIFA v UEFA
Whatever FIFA does, UEFA often does the opposite shortly after. After the World Cup's inflated ticket prices were announced, UEFA made it clear that prices for Euro 2028 would stay reasonable. When Somali referee Omar Artan was barred from entering the US, UEFA offered him the Super Cup final. When FIFA reprieved suspended US striker Folarin Balogun so he could play against Belgium, much to the White House's approval, UEFA argued for the sanctity of the disciplinary process. UEFA will not brandish red cards for players who cover their mouth during a confrontation. So, after FIFA brought in the sponsored hydration break, expect UEFA to resist "the game of four quarters".

5 DIFFICULT MATHS AND POINTLESS MATCHES
Simply put, the 48-team format doesn't work smoothly. In an ideal world, the tournament would go back to 32 but that isn't happening under FIFA. It would be little surprise if 2030 became 64 teams with Uruguay, Argentina and Paraguay given full groups to host rather than simply individual games.

Jonathan WILSON
TECHNICALLY SPEAKING

Defensive Deschamps ignored his instincts

After 14 years as a cautious coach of France, Didier Deschamps abandoned his principles when he needed them most

Nothing became Didier Deschamps' time as France manager less well than the leaving of it. He had been France head coach for 14 years. He had imposed a vital discipline on a country whose players hadn't always demonstrated it. He reached five major tournament semi-finals and won the 2018 World Cup, and yet the question was always whether he had wasted two of the greatest generations of players any country has ever produced back-to-back, whether his instinctive caution had ended up costing France. In the semi-final against Spain, though, he arguably wasn't defensive enough.

There are multiple ironies here, paradoxes built upon paradoxes. Deschamps' defenders would say he is simply a pragmatist, that he is not defensive or attacking *per se*, but does whatever it takes to win. So, blessed with a forward line of Kylian Mbappe, Michael Olise, Ousmane Dembele and Desire Doue or Bradley Barcola, he chose to play them, with a midfield two. In the group stage and last 32 they played thrilling football. They were attacking and fun and looked almost irresistible.

Bowing out ...Deschamps after France's semi-final exit

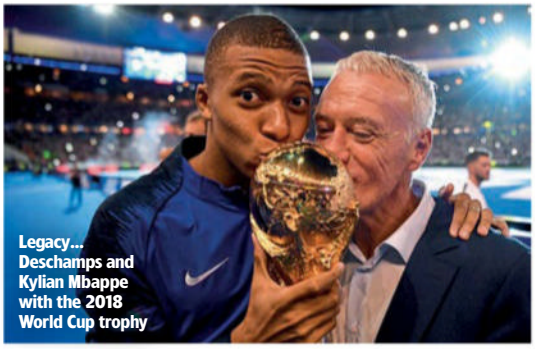
> The sense lingers that the extraordinary talent France have had at their disposal has been wasted

But Paraguay resisted them in the last 16 and very effectively. France retained their composure and a 1-0 win was probably more comfortable than it sounds but the warning signs were there. France then beat Morocco very comfortably in the quarter-final. In both those games, the issue seemed less control of the game than whether they could take sufficient chances. Morocco especially seemed cowed by the French press.

So perhaps there was no reason to change approach. But the assumption throughout the tournament had been that Deschamps would at some point leave out one of his front four to play an extra midfielder and switch to 4-3-3, that he would revert to the sort of quest for control that has dominated his career up till now. But he did not.

Did Deschamps think that France could press Spain in a way that could protect his midfield? Was he carried away, knowing this was his final tournament, by the thought of winning the World Cup in an attacking style that would cast the rest of his reign in a more positive light? Was it simply that the front four had come to seem immutable? Whatever the reason, he selected the familiar front four, with Barcola rather than Doue on the left, and went for a midfield two of Adrien Rabiot and Aurelien Tchouameni.

Even that seemed a needless risk. Tchouameni had not looked fully fit and had not had a great tournament. Manu Kone had looked extremely good against Morocco. Why make the change? Rabiot looked panicked, perhaps having to cover too much for his partner. Already booked, he made a rash challenge on Rodri before half-time for which he could easily have collected a second yellow. He clearly had to be replaced, so Kone came on for him rather than for Tchouameni. The opportunity to field all three had been lost. Could N'Golo Kante have



Legacy... Deschamps and Kylian Mbappe with the 2018 World Cup trophy

come on? Perhaps, but he hadn't played a second all tournament, which made the decision to select him in the squad rather than Eduardo Camavinga baffling and, frankly, an error.

The defeat marks an odd conclusion to Deschamps' career, his ultimate defeat in a strange way a vindication of his caution for the previous 14 years. And yet the sense lingers that the extraordinary talent France have had at their disposal has been wasted. Even when they won the World Cup, in 2018, it was an oddly unmemorable triumph. The 4-3 win over Argentina in the last 16 was one of the least thrilling seven-goal thrillers there's ever been; France just seemed better and the assumption was that, once the freakish goals had stopped going in, they would prevail.

The semi-final victory over Belgium was grimly functional. Eden Hazard was moved to say that he'd rather lose with Belgium than win with France playing like that. Which is the sort of thing defeated players often say, but that seemed an oddly bloodless France, certainly when compared to the side of the early '80s, which lost in the World Cup semi-finals of 1982 and 1986 and won the Euros in 1984. Winning tends to justify any approach, but it was the flat defeats – in the Euro 2016 final and in the semi-final of the last Euros – that exposed its shortcomings, when it felt France had a great arsenal but had somehow failed to fire a shot.

Under Aime Jacquet, who led them to World Cup success in 1998, France discovered that it preferred being calculating winners than glorious losers. Deschamps was captain of that side and clearly took a lot from Jacquet. The 1998 team featured a curtain of three midfielders – Christian Karembeu, Deschamps and Emmanuel Petit, with Zinedine Zidane and Youri Djorkaeff creating behind Stephane Guivarc'h. The 2018 side had Paul Pogba, Kante and Blaise Matuidi providing the platform for Antoine Griezmann, Mbappe and Olivier Giroud.

There could have been a similar pattern this time, but instead Deschamps ignored his instincts, ignored precedent, and paid the penalty.

World Cup in numbers

Eye-catching facts and stats from the 2026 World Cup...

2.96
With 308 goals scored in 104 matches, the tournament averaged 2.96 goals per game – the highest tally since the 1970 finals.

1,068
There have now been over 1,000 World Cup matches played, with the group-stage meeting between Japan and Tunisia the milestone game.

23
The Netherlands have now gone 23 World Cup games without losing in normal time, a run that stretches back to 2010, an all-time record.

65,490
The average attendance at this World Cup, second only to the record of 68,991 set by the USA when it last hosted in 1994.

8
Number of players over 40 years of age at this World Cup – more than all of the previous tournaments put together.

5
Coach Carlos Queiroz has now been to five consecutive tournaments (once with Portugal, three times with Iran and now with Ghana), matching the record of Bora Milutinovic.

3
Three different coaches – Hugo Broos (South Africa), Miroslav Koubek (Czech Republic) and Dick Advocaat (Curacao) – set new records as the oldest managers in World Cup history.

15
Fifteen players were shown red cards during the 2026 World Cup, more than the last two editions combined.

120+5
Youri Tielemans' last-32 winner from the penalty spot for Belgium against Senegal in the fifth minute of stoppage time in extra-time was the latest World Cup goal ever scored.

Late, late goal...Youri Tielemans

Landmark goal...Enzo Fernandez

3,000
Enzo Fernandez's late header in Argentina's thrilling comeback victory against Egypt was the 3,000th goal in World Cup history.

7
Spain goalkeeper Unai Simon's seven clean sheets is a record at a single World Cup finals.

26
Didier Deschamps managed his 26th match at the World Cup, overtaking the record held by former West Germany boss Helmut Schon. The Frenchman won 20 of those matches, another all-time tournament record.

14
Fourteen own goals were scored at this World Cup, beating the previous record of 12 set in 2018. As a percentage, though, the finals in Russia still holds the record (7.1% to 4.55%).

163
The Premier League was the best-represented league supplying 163 World Cup players, followed by the Bundesliga (102) and La Liga (80).

19
Manchester City had the most players selected for the tournament, followed by Bayern Munich (17), Paris Saint-Germain (16), Arsenal and Barcelona (both 15).

18
Countries whose managers left during or immediately after the World Cup: Javier Aguirre (Mexico), Hugo Broos (South Africa), Miroslav Koubek (Czech Republic), Hong Myung-bo (South Korea), Sebastien Migne (Haiti), Steve Clarke (Scotland), Sebastian Beccacece (Ecuador), Julian Nagelsmann (Germany), Ronald Koeman (Netherlands), Sabri Lamouchi and Herve Renard (Tunisia), Rudi Garcia (Belgium), Marcelo Bielsa (Uruguay), Pape Thiaw (Senegal), Didier Deschamps (France), Jamal Sellami (Jordan), Roberto Martinez (Portugal), Zlatko Dalic (Croatia) and Carlos Queiroz (Ghana).

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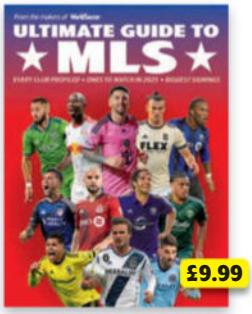

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World Cup 2026...complete squad lists for all 48 teams

South America

TIM VICKERY

Giants and minnows

The Copa Libertadores knockout stage is a combination of heavyweight contenders and rising underdogs

Over 60 players from South American clubs were on duty in the World Cup – and within a few weeks of the tournament ending, many of them will be rushed back into international action, this time with their club sides. The first knockout round of the Copa Libertadores takes place in the middle of August.

Predictably, the two clubs who had the most players at the World Cup were Flamengo and Palmeiras, the Brazilian pair who have been by far the leading forces in their country's unprecedented seven-year domination of the competition. A glance at the runners and riders in this year's last 16 makes it clear that an eighth consecutive triumph for Brazilian football is extremely likely.

Seven former champions are left in the field. Five of them are from Brazil, and the highlight of the round looks like being the clash between two of these giants, with last year's winners Flamengo taking on Cruzeiro. Palmeiras face Cerro Porteno of Paraguay, who will be outgunned in technical terms but will try to compensate with competitive spirit. And there is a double dose of Brazil versus Argentina, with Corinthians taking on Angel Di Maria's Rosario Central, and, in one of three repeats of group-stage clashes, Fluminense meet their fellow Group C qualifiers Independiente Rivadavia.

Of the six Brazilian sides remaining, the only non-champion are debutants Mirassol, who face a potentially tricky tie against LDU of Ecuador.

Four Argentine clubs remain to do battle, and their identity highlights a trend in Argentina. Rivadavia, also debutants, are from Mendoza. They were a revelation in the group phase, scoring more goals than anyone else

Rematch... Independiente Rivadavia of Argentina topped Group C ahead of Fluminense

Highlight of the last 16...Flamengo will face Cruzeiro in an all-Brazilian tie

Sudamericana prestige...River Plate won this trophy in 2014

and, together with Flamengo, racking up five wins and a draw in their six games. All of the other teams suffered at least one defeat.

It is just as well that new provincial forces such as Independiente Rivadavia have emerged, because not a single Buenos Aires heavyweight still stands. The only club from the capital are Platense, another team enjoying their first Libertadores campaign, who come from the northern outskirts of the Argentine capital.

There is a theme here of giants and minnows – and since Platense have been drawn against humble Coquimbo Unido of Chile, at least one of the minnows will make it through to the quarter-finals. In the other clash of Argentina versus Chile, Estudiantes of La Plata are up against Universidad Catolica.

This is the first time in 14 years that two Chilean clubs have reached the last 16. Ecuador, so strong in the competition in recent times, also have two – as well as 2008 champions LDU, Independiente del Valle are back once more. Now known all over the world for their youth production, the club from the outskirts of Quito also have a shrewd eye for picking up experienced players, and may well consider themselves narrow favourites to get past Tolima of Colombia.

Six of the CONMEBOL countries still have an interest in the Libertadores. All ten, meanwhile, continue to be represented in the Copa Sudamericana – a figure boosted by the fact that a total of 24 teams are still involved. The quest to claim the main event glamour trophy has already come to an end for Uruguay, Bolivia, Peru and Venezuela, but not the Sudamericana.

> A glance at the runners and riders in this year's last 16 makes it clear that an eighth consecutive triumph for Brazilian football is extremely likely

At the end of July, the teams who finished second in their Sudamericana group met the sides who came third in the Libertadores. Intriguingly, the second-string competition still contains a total of ten former continental champions, meaning that this year's version could receive unprecedented attention. There is, for example, the very real prospect of a semi-final between River Plate and Boca Juniors, with both the Buenos Aires giants chasing an international title as a welcome boost to prestige. But here, too, they will have to see off the Brazilians, whose seven representatives include six former Libertadores winners.

Possible surprise sides include Olimpia of Paraguay, who enjoyed a strong first half of the year, while tiny compatriots Recoleta sprung the biggest shock of the group phase, finishing top ahead of Brazil's Santos and San Lorenzo of Argentina. Macara of Ecuador also won their group, as did Montevideo City Torque of Uruguay. But from Red Bull Bragantino in Brazil to Caracas in Venezuela, clubs from all over the continent can set their sights on making the Sudamericana final in Barranquilla, Colombia on November 21 – a week before the Copa Libertadores comes to a climax in Uruguay's capital Montevideo.

THE KNOCKOUT ROUND DRAWS

Copa Libertadores last 16

First legs August 11-13; second legs August 18-20

- Estudiantes LP v Universidad Catolica
- Mirassol v LDU Quito
- Fluminense v Independiente Rivadavia
- Tolima v Independiente del Valle
- Cruzeiro v Flamengo
- Platense v Coquimbo Unido
- Palmeiras v Cerro Porteno
- Rosario Central v Corinthians

Copa Sudamericana last 16

First legs August 11-13; second legs August 18-20

- Boca Juniors/ O'Higgins v Recoleta
- Sporting Cristal/ Red Bull Bragantino v Atletico Mineiro
- Lanus/ Cienciano v Botafogo
- Independiente Medellin/ Vasco da Gama v Olimpia
- Santa Fe/ Caracas v River Plate
- Nacional/ Tigre v Montevideo City Torque
- Universidad Central/ Santos v Macara
- Bolivar/ Gremio v Sao Paulo

North America

JAMES NALTON

Preview

Reception to Leagues Cup remains lukewarm

Mexico will host matches in the MLS-Liga MX tournament for the first time, but the competition is still yet to convince

Fresh from hosting the 2026 World Cup, the United States, Canada and Mexico are back on the international football scene just a month later, as club teams from the three nations compete against each other in the Leagues Cup.

All 18 teams from Liga MX will take part, while the 18 MLS teams will consist of the nine from each conference, East and West, who qualified for the MLS Cup play-offs in 2025. This makes it 18 teams from Mexico, 17 from the United States and one from Canada, the Vancouver Whitecaps.

The sixth edition of this annual tournament, which began in 2019 and expanded in 2023, will be the first to feature matches played in Mexico, after previous formats saw games played solely in the US and Canada. Three of the stadiums used for the World Cup will feature: the Azteca in Mexico City, Seattle's Lumen Field and BC Place in Vancouver.

Best in Mexico... Cruz Azul are the reigning Liga MX champions

Despite expanding to include games played in Mexico, there are only four of them, which still puts most of MLS at an advantage.

Another area of controversy that remains around this tournament is that its introduction to an already packed calendar means the United States' domestic cup competition and FA Cup equivalent, the US Open Cup, will not feature all MLS teams for the third year running. Even the past two winners of the US Open Cup, Los Angeles FC and Nashville SC, have been unable to defend their trophy after not qualifying for the subsequent editions due to their participation in the CONCACAF Champions Cup and Leagues Cup. MLS clubs are only permitted to compete in two additional competitions alongside their league commitments.

The Leagues Cup is seen by many as an unnecessary addition to the busy football calendar, especially in a year in which the MLS season has been interrupted by the World Cup.

Like many other heavily criticised tournaments, including the World Cup itself, once the games actually get underway, the football can provide an entertaining spectacle. International club games always provide some intrigue due to the relative rarity of the match-ups, and because teams and their fans like to test themselves against other leagues to see where they stand. The tournament now also makes sure that there are MLS v Liga MX match-ups up to the quarter-finals stage, a welcome new change to the format that was introduced in 2025.

It's a format that is retained from that 2025 edition. There are two 18-team group-stage tables, one for MLS sides and the other for Liga MX, but the teams play their three matches against teams from the other league. Opponents were drawn based on a combination of 2025 league performance and an east-west regional split. It's three points for a win and one point for a draw, but games that are level after 90 minutes will go to a penalty shootout with an additional point available for the winner.

The Leagues Cup is seen by many as an unnecessary addition to the busy football calendar

Only the top four teams progress from each of the two groups of 18 at the end of the league phase to set up the quarter-finals, so the tie-breakers, which count wins in regular time first, and then goal difference, can soon come into play.

Defending champions Seattle Sounders conceded just two goals in the whole of last season's tournament, and saw off Inter Miami 3-0 in a memorable final for the Cascadia club against Lionel Messi's side.

Messi has already won a Leagues Cup, doing so shortly after joining Miami in 2023, and his team will be among the favourites once again, along with some of the stronger MLS teams in 2026 so far, including Nashville SC, San Jose Earthquakes, and Vancouver Whitecaps. But given the month-long break in the MLS season for the World Cup, it could feel like the start of a new season for MLS teams – just as it will for Mexican sides, whose 2026-27 Apertura campaign begins on the day before the World Cup final.

Three Mexican teams will host matches during the group phase – CONCACAF champions Toluca (with two), Club America and Tigres UANL – which should give them a strong chance of reaching the quarter-finals. From there they will be looking to become the first Mexican winners of the tournament since its expansion in 2023. 2026 Clausura champions Cruz Azul should also be in the mix despite playing all their games in the United States.

It will be a quick turnaround from the World Cup back to the domestic leagues for North American soccer fans, and there will even be some overlap. By the end of August, another winner of a tournament taking place across Canada, the United States and Mexico will have been crowned.

Holders...Seattle Sounders defeated Inter Miami in last season's final

Continental champions...Mexican giants Toluca won the CONCACAF Champions Cup in May

Oceania

STEVE MENARY

Last year's final... Auckland City saw off Hekari United in 2025 *Credit: OFC Media via Phototek*

OFC Champions League faces its latest challenge

The Oceania Football Confederation's continental competition resumes amid doubts over its future

Since first being staged in 1987, the Oceania Football Confederation's Champions League has survived plenty of tests, including revised formats and Australian clubs leaving in 2006 after their national association defected to Asia. But the new OFC Professional League and the game's expansion in New Zealand are bigger threats.

The Pro League's inaugural winners Auckland FC will now take Oceania's place in FIFA's Club World Cup, denying a regular appearance to perennial OFC Champions League winners and holders Auckland City.

From New Zealand's National League, Auckland City first won the competition in 2006 and have 13 titles in all, including seven in a row between 2011 and 2017.

The emergence of Auckland FC, which entered Australia's A-League in 2024 and won both the latest title and the inaugural Pro League, has overshadowed City and the club have been drawn in a tough group in this year's Champions League, which runs from August 9-22 in Lautoka and Ba in Fiji.

Auckland City's biggest competition could have expected to be from AS Venus of Tahiti, the only other club in the field to have reached the final before. Venus were thumped 3-0 by Auckland City in 2022 but are 11 times domestic champions and were used as the basis for the Tahiti United side that played in and finished seventh of eight clubs in the OFC Pro League. Their players gained valuable experience in that competition, but Venus are expected to bring a predominantly young squad to Fiji, regarding it as a development opportunity rather than a quest for honours.

Holders...the New Zealanders won their 13th OFC title last year *Credit: OFC Media via Phototek*

Last year's hosts Central Coast return again to represent the Solomon Islands and will hope to get out of the group stage this time after being narrowly edged out by Vanuatu's Ifira Black Bird in 2025.

The only two winners from outside of New Zealand and Australia have come from New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea. Hienghene Sport won in 2019, but Tiga Sport will represent New Caledonia this time. Three times domestic champions, Tiga qualified for the 2025 Champions League, where they were edged out at the semi-final stage by Hekari United.

Last season's beaten finalists and 2010 winners, Hekari were PNG's representatives in the Pro League but will not feature in the Champions League. Lae City, who were only founded in 2014, will represent PNG in 2026.

Lae have won seven domestic titles and been Champions League quarter-finalists twice, albeit back in 2018 and 2019, and should get out of Group B along with ABM Galaxy. The current holders of Vanuatu's Port Vila Premier League reached the quarter-finals on their Champions League debut in 2020 only to be denied further progress by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hosts Rewa also played in last season's Champions League but failed to win a game in the Solomon Islands. Owner Nazeel Buksh, who also runs local supermarket chain Foodcity, will hope for a better performance in front of home support.

Tupapa Maraerenga from the Cook Islands, who decisively won through the qualifying round at the start of this year in Samoa after bringing in a number of eligible players from overseas, are the eighth side but are outsiders to get out of Group B.

THE DRAW

GROUP A

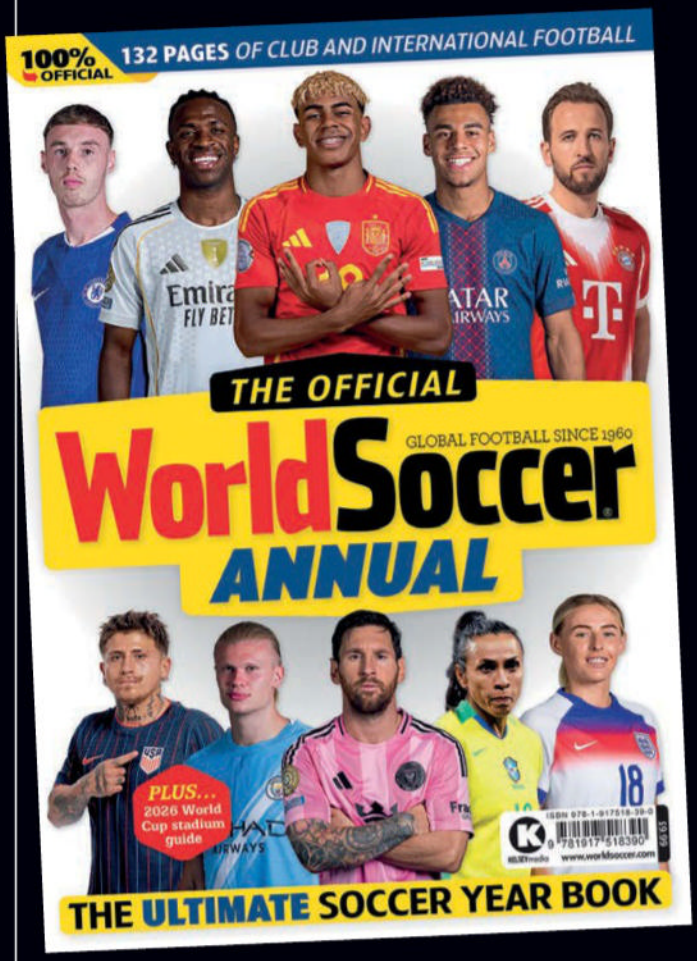
- Auckland City
- Central Coast
- AS Venus
- AS Tiga Sport

GROUP B

- Rewa
- Lae City
- ABM Galaxy
- Tupapa Maraerenga

COMING SOON

For more reaction to the 2026 World Cup and lots of other exciting content, don't miss these annuals on sale later this year...



World Soccer Annual 2027

The World Soccer Annual 2027 looks back over an extraordinary year of football from across the globe, featuring the standout teams, players and matches from both the international and club game – including the 2026 World Cup, the UEFA Champions League and domestic champions from all the biggest leagues on the planet. Plus, we reveal our pics of the year, goals we'd like to see again, and list the final league tables.

Pre-order: shop.kelsey.co.uk/product/the-official-world-soccer-annual-2027

MATCH Annual 2027

The MATCH Annual 2027 is packed with fun, quizzes and pics, counts down the top 30 strikers in the world and reminisces about the most iconic kits in Premier League history. Plus, look ahead to the 2027 Women's World Cup, discover the most exciting wonderkids in world football and revisit the best moments from the 2026 World Cup all over again.

Pre-order: www.panmacmillan.com/authors/match/match-annual-2027/9781035041121

On sale this autumn

Covers displayed are for illustrative purposes only and will be subject to change

OBITUARIES

Tragic loss...Jayden Adams in action at the World Cup

Jayden ADAMS (2001-2026)
Mamelodi Sundowns midfielder who died weeks after fulfilling his dream of playing for South Africa at the World Cup. Adams featured in all of *Bafana Bafana's* three group-stage matches, including the tournament opener against Mexico. He also braved personal upset to play against the Czech Republic 24 hours after the death of his grandmother then helped secure the win over South Korea which sent South Africa into the knockout stages for the first time. Born and raised in the Western Cape, Adams starred in the Stellenbosch academy then moved to Sundowns with whom he won a South African league title.

Kevin KEEGAN (1951-2026)
Two-time Ballon d'Or winner at Hamburg who scored 21 goals in 63 games for England. Also managed the Three Lions and was a club legend for Liverpool and Newcastle United. *Full tribute to follow in next month's issue.*

MANU (1982-2026)
Former Benfica winger who enjoyed his greatest success at Legia Warsaw where he won two Polish Cups.

Ken BATES (1931-2026)
Businessman best known as one of the most colourful figures in modern British football. Bates, who made his fortune in haulage and property, bought debt-ridden, Second-Division Chelsea for a nominal fee of £1 in 1982. Over the next 22 years, he fought off property developers to secure the freehold of Stamford Bridge and oversaw the end of a 26-year trophy drought with victory in the FA Cup in 1997 as well as European Cup Winners' Cup and League Cup success. In 2003, he fundamentally altered the landscape of the Premier League by selling the club to Russian billionaire Roman Abramovich for £140 million, paving the way for the club's modern success. Later he was owner of Leeds United, and for many years was a central figure at the FA.

CFR Cluj and Romania midfielder ...Gabriel Muresan

Big character ...Ken Bates

Wolfgang PAUL (1940-2026)
Tall, commanding central defender who captained Borussia Dortmund to their extra-time victory over Liverpool in the 1965 European Cup Winners' Cup final. Paul was included in West Germany's 1966 World Cup squad but never played in the finals. Injury later forced his premature retirement.

Beniamino DI GIACOMO (1935-2026)
Busy and selfless centre-forward in the Internazionale team who won the Serie A title under Helenio Herrera in 1963. Replaced the following season by Aurelio Milani just after making his only Italy appearance in a friendly against Denmark in December 1964.

Giovanni FANELLO (1939-2026)
Forward with Catanzaro, Milan and Alessandria, before totalling 88 league goals in Serie A and Serie B with Napoli. Played for hosts Italy in the 1960 Rome Olympics before moving to Canada with Toronto Italia.

Alan BANKS (1938-2026)
The striker started out at Liverpool but went on to become an Exeter City legend, scoring 101 goals in 258 league games across two spells with the Devon club.

Gabriel MURESAN (1982-2026)
Made nine appearances as a defensive midfielder for Romania between 2007 and 2011. Stalwart of CFR Cluj with whom he won three league titles, three domestic cups and one super cup, as well as another with ASA Tirgu Mures.

CARMELO Cedrun (1930-2026)
Carmelo, who made 334 league appearances for Athletic Club between 1950 and 1964, was the first in a long line of outstanding Basque goalkeepers stretching on from his successor Jose Angel Iribar to Andoni Zubizarreta to Unai Simon. Carmelo, conceding only 31 goals in 30 games, played a key role in the Bilbao club's 1955-56 league title campaign. Later played for Espanyol and then in the United States with Baltimore Bays. Won 13 caps for Spain between 1954 and 1963 after making his debut in the infamous 1954 World Cup qualifying play-off against Turkey.

Bobby IRVINE (1942-2026)
Goalkeeper who won eight caps for Northern Ireland between 1962 and 1965. Made his name with Linfield then moved to English football with Stoke City. Elder brother of winger Willie Irvine. They were once opposing captains for a league match between Stoke and Burnley.

Hans BUZEK (1938-2026)
Centre-forward who had been the last surviving member of Austria's 1958 World Cup squad. Buzek held the distinction of playing for all four of Vienna's major clubs: First Vienna, FK Austria, Wiener Sport-Club and Rapid. He won the title with First Vienna in 1955 and the cup with both FK Austria (1967) and Rapid (1972). League top scorer in both 1956 and 1966. Hit nine goals in 42 internationals and had been Austria's youngest debutant for more than half a century until David Alaba surpassed him in 2009.

Antonio RATTIN (1937-2026)
Rattin was one of the most imposing and iconic figures in Argentinian football history. Born in Tigre, Buenos Aires, he spent his entire professional club career with Boca Juniors, a pivotal Argentinian No.5 (defensive midfielder) in the tradition of Luis Monti and Nestor Rossi. He led Boca to four Primera Division titles and won 34 caps for Argentina, including at the 1962 and 1966 World Cups. In the latter he featured in one of the finals' most infamous chapters on being sent off in the quarter-final against England at Wembley by West German referee Rudolf Kreitlein. Rattin refused to leave the pitch for several minutes in an incident which prompted the development of yellow and red cards to avert future language barriers. Rattin remained a domestic icon who, after retiring, briefly coached Boca and Gimnasia Esgrima La Plata, and was a member of the Argentine Chamber of Deputies from 2001 to 2005.

Argentina icon...Antonio Rattin

Herbie WILLIAMS (1940-2026)
Popular Swansea City forward and Wales international. Joined Swansea in 1955, transitioning from inside-forward to wing-half to centre-forward and centre-half. Totalled 608 appearances in all competitions, scoring 129 goals. Won the Welsh Cup in 1966 and was a key member of the side that reached the FA Cup semi-finals in 1964.

Words by Keir Radnedge & Jamie Evans

"He's extremely dynamic, with great stamina, work-rate and mobility. His greatest quality is his personality. He always wants the ball, and even under pressure, he doesn't feel it"

Former Real Madrid head coach Alvaro Arbeloa on Thiago Pitarch

Thiago PITARCH

(Spain & Real Madrid)

Before the World Cup concluded, Spanish football underlined its excellence by winning another youth title, lifting their second European Under-19 Championship in three years and a record 13th overall.

Central to their success in Wales was midfielder Pitarch, playing more minutes in Spain's victorious campaign than any other player – perhaps unsurprisingly, given that he played 16 times for Real Madrid last season. One of those games, the meeting with Manchester City in the Champions League round of 16, saw him become *Los Blancos'* second-youngest starter in the knockout stages of the continental competition.

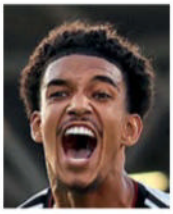
As well as possessing all the technical ability that one would expect from a silky Spanish midfielder, he is also a tenacious tackler, allowing him to take charge of the centre of the pitch.

With a Moroccan grandfather, he is also eligible for the Atlas Lions. The North Africans will still be hoping to persuade yet another Real Madrid academy graduate to choose them over *La Roja*, following in the footsteps of Achraf Hakimi and Brahim Diaz. Pitarch's connection to the Spanish setup, though, could be further enhanced at next summer's Under-20 World Cup in Azerbaijan and Uzbekistan, which Spain qualified for by winning this tournament.

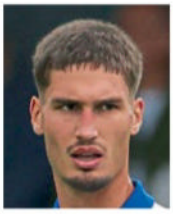
Xavi ESPART
(Spain & Barcelona)
Pitarch's midfield partner, not only in the Spain side but also in the official UEFA Team of the Tournament. Used here in the holding role, he made his Barcelona debut at right-back in March.

Pavlo LYUSIN
(Ukraine & Dynamo Kyiv)
Midfield star of a Ukraine side that topped their group ahead of Croatia, Italy and Serbia en route to an agonising stoppage-time defeat to Germany in the semi-finals. Had a hand in four of his team's seven goals, scoring one and assisting three.

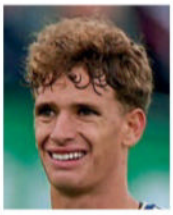
Otto STANGE
(Germany & Hamburg)
Four goals made the 6ft 2in striker the joint-top scorer at the tournament alongside Spain and Real Betis winger Jose Morante, and also took him to a highly impressive 12 goals in as many caps for Germany's Under-19s.



Francis ONYEKA
(Germany & Elversberg)
Attacking midfielder who scored three goals in Wales. Impressed on loan from Leverkusen in the German second tier last season at Bochum, and will now step up to the Bundesliga with newly-promoted Elversberg on another loan.



Nikola SIMIC
(Serbia & Partizan Belgrade)
Tall, dominant centre-back who formed part of Serbia's U19 squad in Wales despite having made his senior international debut earlier in the summer. Already firmly established at the heart of Partizan's defence at the tender age of 19.



Andrea NATALI
(Italy & Bayer Leverkusen)
The son of former Bologna, Fiorentina and Torino defender Cesare has had a remarkably nomadic youth career, representing the academies of Milan, Barcelona and now Leverkusen. Centre-back in the Team of the Tournament.

"I tried, I tried. Now it's over. I started here, I finished here"

Brazil's record goalscorer Neymar tells *TV Globo* that his international career is over following his side's loss to Norway

12 MOVES *you might have missed...*

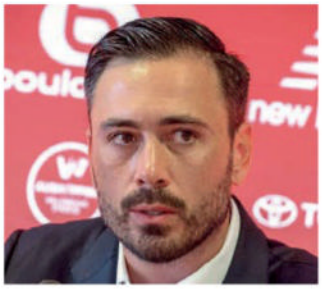
TRANSFERS ★ LOANS ★ SACKINGS ★ HIRINGS ★ SWITCHES ★ RETIREMENTS

Slaven BILIC

Following the departure of long-serving coach Zlatko Dalic, **Croatia** turned to their former boss. Bilic led the team to the Euros in 2008 and 2012 during his first spell in charge.

Jorge JESUS

Portugal hired the ex-Flamengo, Al Nassr and Benfica boss. Elsewhere, Germany turned to Jurgen Klopp, and Mexico promoted Rafael Marquez from assistant to head coach.



Davide ANCELOTTI

After assisting his father Carlo for Brazil's 2026 World Cup campaign, Ancelotti Junior took charge of Ligue 1 side **Lille**. His previous managerial role was with Botafogo.

Liam ROSENIOR

Elsewhere in Ligue 1, Rosenior was appointed by **Paris FC** following the departure of Antoine Kombouare. It is the Englishman's first role since leaving Chelsea in April.

Massimiliano ALLEGRI

Just weeks after being sacked by Milan for failing to qualify for the Champions League, Allegri landed a new job, replacing Antonio Conte as head coach of **Napoli**.

Ange POSTECOGLOU

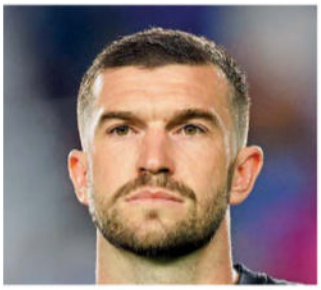
The ex-Celtic, Tottenham Hotspur and Australia boss will work with Cristiano Ronaldo after replacing Jorge Jesus as manager of Saudi Pro League side **Al Nassr**.

Alvaro ARBELOA

Fulham hired the former Liverpool defender to replace Benfica-bound Marco Silva. Arbeloa managed Real Madrid in the second half of last season following Xabi Alonso's exit.

Jeremy MONGA

Manchester City paid £10 million to beat Arsenal to the signing of the young winger from Leicester City, making him one of the most expensive English teenagers ever.



Tim PAYNE

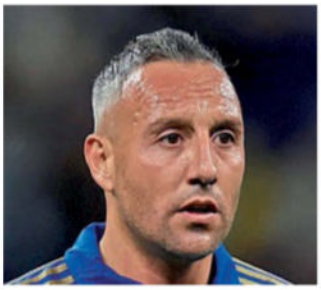
After a social media campaign that saw the New Zealand defender gain millions of followers at the World Cup, Payne joined Paraguayan side **Olimpia** from Wellington Phoenix.

Sadio MANE

Senegal's all-time record scorer ended his international career on 55 goals in 132 games. Algeria also said goodbye to a legendary winger after Riyad Mahrez retired from duty.

Patrik SCHICK

The **Czech Republic** striker also retired from international football, as did Enner Valencia (Ecuador), Manuel Neuer (Germany), Guillermo Ochoa (Mexico) and Wataru Endo (Japan).



Santi CAZORLA

Following the La Liga relegation of his boyhood club **Real Oviedo**, the 41-year-old ended his playing career. In total he played over 800 games including 81 times for Spain.

"My main motivation is staying and bringing this club back to the Premier League where we belong"

Captain Jarrod Bowen announces he'll be staying at West Ham United despite their relegation to the Championship

BIGGEST SUMMER TRANSFERS

£116m	**Elliot ANDERSON**	*(Nott'm Forest to Manchester City)*
£92.5m	**Sandro TONALI**	*(Newcastle United to Tottenham Hotspur)*
£85m	**Mateus FERNANDES**	*(West Ham to Tottenham Hotspur)*
£69.3m	**Anthony GORDON**	*(Newcastle United to Barcelona)*
£60.2m	**Goncalo RAMOS**	*(PSG to Milan)*
£55m	**Jeremy JACQUET**	*(Rennes to Liverpool)*
£52m	**Jan Paul VAN HECKE**	*(Brighton to Tottenham Hotspur)*
£51.8m	**Marc CUCURELLA**	*(Chelsea to Real Madrid)*
£51.m	**Johan MANZAMBI**	*(Freiburg to Aston Villa)*
£48m	**Andrey SANTOS**	*(Chelsea to Manchester United)*
£47m	**Marco PALESTRA**	*(Atalanta to Chelsea)*
£46m	**Luka VUSKOVIC**	*(Tottenham Hotspur to Brighton)*
£43.2m	**Rasmus HOJLUND**	*(Manchester United to Napoli)**
£43m	**Ismael SAIBARI**	*(PSV to Bayern Munich)*
£43m	**Bazoumana TOURE**	*(Hoffenheim to Newcastle United)*
£42.9m	**Nathaniel BROWN**	*(Eintracht Frankfurt to Bayern Munich)*
£40m	**Geovany QUENDA**	*(Sporting to Chelsea)*
£35m	**Youri TIELEMANS**	*(Aston Villa to Manchester United)*
£34.5m	**Piero HINCAPIE**	*(Bayer Leverkusen to Arsenal)**
£34.5m	**Victor MUNOZ**	*(Osasuna to Liverpool)*
£34.1m	**Tarik MUHAREMOVIC**	*(Sassuolo to Leeds United)*
£34m	**Morten HJULMAND**	*(Sporting to Atletico Madrid)*
£34m	**JOAO GOMES**	*(Wolves to Aston Villa)*
£33m	**Mason GREENWOOD**	*(Marseille to Fenerbahce)*
£27.3m	**Maxime ESTEVE**	*(Burnley to RB Leipzig)*
£25.8m	**Rodrigo ZALAZAR**	*(Braga to Sporting)*
£25.6m	**Arthur ATTA**	*(Udinese to Fiorentina)*
£25.6m	**Mario GILA**	*(Lazio to Milan)*
£25.5m	**Orkun KOKCU**	*(Benfica to Besiktas)**
£25m	**Afonso MOREIRA**	*(Lyon to Bayer Leverkusen)*

World Cup star... Ismael Saibari has joined Bayern Munich

Liverpool centre-back ...Jeremy Jacquet

£24m	**EMERSONN**	*(Toulouse to Ipswich Town)*
£23m	**Sean STEUR**	*(Ajax to Newcastle United)*
£22.1m	**Christ INAO OULAI**	*(Trabzonspor to Fiorentina)*
£21.6m	**Mathys DETOURBET**	*(Troyes to Manchester City)*
£21.6m	**Emmanuel EMEGHA**	*(Strasbourg to Chelsea)*
£21.6m	**Ewen JAOUEN**	*(Reims to Newcastle United)*
£21.6m	**Donyell MALEN**	*(Aston Villa to Roma)**
£21.6m	**Patrick ZABI**	*(Reims to Paris FC)*
£21.5m	**Zadok YOHANNA**	*(AIK to Brighton)*
£21.4m	**Alvaro RODRIGUEZ**	*(Elche to Bournemouth)*
£20m	**FLORENTINO**	*(Benfica to Burnley)**
£20m	**Loum TCHAOUNA**	*(Burnley to Coventry City)*
£19.9m	**Aleksandar STANKOVIC**	*(Club Brugge to Internazionale)*
£19m	**Pascal STRUIJK**	*(Leeds United to Brighton)*
£18.9m	**Alex GRIMALDO**	*(Bayer Leverkusen to Atletico Madrid)*
£18m	**Tyrique GEORGE**	*(Chelsea to Everton)**
£18m	**Eduard SPERTSYAN**	*(Krasnodar to Al Ahli)*
£17.8m	**Issa DOUMBIA**	*(Venezia to Sporting)*
£17.3m	**Merlin ROHL**	*(Freiburg to Everton)**
£17.1m	**Denzel DUMFRIES**	*(Internazionale to Real Madrid)*
£17.1m	**Jakub KAMINSKI**	*(Cologne to Benfica)*
£17.1m	**Eliezer MAYENDA**	*(Sunderland to Rennes)*
£17m	**Nathan DE CAT**	*(Anderlecht to Hoffenheim)*
£17m	**Rocco REITZ**	*(Borussia M'gladbach to RB Leipzig)*
£17m	**Heorhiy SUDAKOV**	*(Shakhtar Donetsk to Benfica)**
£16.5m	**Joane GADOU**	*(Red Bull Salzburg to Borussia Dortmund)*
£16.5m	**Hayden HACKNEY**	*(Middlesbrough to Everton)*
£15.4m	**Sergi ALTIMIRA**	*(Real Betis to Sporting)*
£15.4m	**Aurele AMENDA**	*(Eintracht Frankfurt to Coventry City)*
£15.3m	**Diego COPPOLA**	*(Brighton to Paris FC)*
£15.3m	**Leandro TROSSARD**	*(Arsenal to Besiktas)*
£15m	**Jaidon ANTHONY**	*(Burnley to Brentford)*

*Loan made permanent

FREE TRANSFERS

David ALABA	*(Real Madrid to free agent)*
Yves BISSOUMA	*(Tottenham Hotspur to free agent)*
Julian BRANDT	*(Borussia Dortmund to free agent)*
Marcelo BROZOVIC	*(Al Nassr to free agent)*
Dani CARVAJAL	*(Real Madrid to free agent)*
CASEMIRO	*(Manchester United to free agent)*
Dani CEBALLOS	*(Real Madrid to free agent)*
Zeki CELIK	*(Roma to Juventus)*
Karl DARLOW	*(Leeds United to Manchester United)*
Stefan DE VRIJ	*(Internazionale to Panathinaikos)*
Abdoulaye DOUCOURE	*(NEOM to free agent)*
Nabil FEKIR	*(Al Jazira to free agent)*
Leon GORETZKA	*(Bayern Munich to free agent)*
Antoine GRIEZMANN	*(Atletico Madrid to Orlando City)*
Angus GUNN	*(Nottingham Forest to San Jose Earthquakes)*
Raphael GUERREIRO	*(Bayern Munich to free agent)*
Mauro ICARDI	*(Galatasaray to free agent)*
Vincent JANSSEN	*(Royal Antwerp to free agent)*
Franck KESSIE	*(Al Ahli to free agent)*
Ibrahima KONATE	*(Liverpool to Real Madrid)*
Mario LEMINA	*(Galatasaray to free agent)*
Robert LEWANDOWSKI	*(Barcelona to Chicago Fire)*
Riyad MAHREZ	*(Al Ahli to free agent)*

MLS new boy... Robert Lewandowski

Leeds signing... Harry Wilson

Tyrell MALACIA	*(Manchester United to free agent)*
Illan MESLIER	*(Leeds United to Arsenal)*
Thomas MEUNIER	*(Lille to Sunderland)*
Oscar MINGUEZA	*(Celta Vigo to Crystal Palace)*
Tanguy NIANZOU	*(Sevilla to Lille)*
Stefan ORTEGA	*(Nottingham Forest to free agent)*
Andy ROBERTSON	*(Liverpool to Tottenham Hotspur)*
Allan SAINT-MAXIMIN	*(Lens to Charlotte FC)*
Mohamed SALAH	*(Liverpool to free agent)*
Alexis SANCHEZ	*(Sevilla to free agent)*
Jadon SANCHO	*(Manchester United to free agent)*
Malang SARR	*(Lens to free agent)*
Xaver SCHLAGER	*(RB Leipzig to free agent)*
Marcos SENESI	*(Bournemouth to Tottenham Hotspur)*
Bernardo SILVA	*(Manchester City to Real Madrid)*
Yann SOMMER	*(Internazionale to Club Brugge)*
John STONES	*(Manchester City to free agent)*
Takehiro TOMIYASU	*(Ajax to free agent)*
Adama TRAORE	*(West Ham United to free agent)*
Dusan VLAHOVIC	*(Juventus to free agent)*
Callum WILSON	*(West Ham United to Brentford)*
Harry WILSON	*(Fulham to Leeds United)*
Oleksandr ZINCHENKO	*(Ajax to free agent)*

WORLD CUP 2026

ALGERIA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Melvin **MASTIL**	(26) 19.02.00	Stade Nyonnais (Sui)
16	Oussama **BENBOT**	(31) 11.10.94	USM Alger
23	Luca **ZIDANE**	(28) 13.05.98	Granada (Spa)

DEFENDERS

2	Aissa **MANDI**	(34) 22.10.91	Lille (Fra)
3	Achref **ABADA**	(26) 15.06.99	USM Alger
4	Mohamed Amine **TOUGAI**	(26) 22.01.00	Esperance (Tun)
5	Zineddine **BELAID**	(27) 20.03.99	JS Kabylie
13	Jaouen **HADJAM**	(23) 26.03.03	Young Boys (Sui)
15	Rayan **AIT-NOURI**	(25) 06.06.01	Manchester City (Eng)
17	Rafik **BELGHALI**	(24) 07.06.02	Hellas Verona (Ita)
21	Ramy **BENSEBAINI**	(31) 16.04.95	Borussia Dortmund (Ger)
26	Samir **CHERGUI**	(27) 06.02.99	Paris FC (Fra)

MIDFIELDERS

6	Ramiz **ZERROUKI**	(28) 26.05.98	FC Twente (Ned)
8	Houssem **AOUAR**	(27) 30.06.98	Al Ittihad (KSA)
10	Fares **CHAIBI**	(23) 28.11.02	Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)
14	Hicham **BOUDAOUI**	(26) 23.09.99	Nice (Fra)
19	Nabil **BENTALEB**	(31) 24.11.94	Lille (Fra)
22	Ibrahim **MAZA**	(20) 24.11.05	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)
24	Yacine **TITRAOUI**	(22) 26.07.03	Charleroi (Bel)

FORWARDS

7	Riyad **MAHREZ**	(35) 21.02.91	Al Ahli (KSA)
9	Amine **GOUIRI**	(26) 16.02.00	Marseille (Fra)
11	Anis **HADJ MOUSSA**	(24) 11.02.02	Feyenoord (Ned)
12	Nadhir **BENBOUALI**	(26) 17.04.00	Gyor ETO (Hun)
18	Mohamed **AMOURA**	(26) 09.05.00	Wolfsburg (Ger)
20	Adil **BOULBINA**	(23) 02.05.03	Al Duhail (Qat)
25	Fares **GHEDJEMIS**	(23) 06.09.02	Frosinone (Ita)

COACH

Vladimir **PETKOVIC** (Bih/Sui)	(62) 15.08.63	

ARGENTINA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Juan **MUSSO**	(32) 06.05.94	Atletico Madrid (Spa)
12	Geronimo **RULLI**	(34) 20.05.92	Marseille (Fra)
23	Emiliano **MARTINEZ**	(33) 02.09.92	Aston Villa (Eng)

DEFENDERS

2	Marcos **SENESI**	(29) 10.05.97	Bournemouth (Eng)
3	Nicolas **TAGLIAFICO**	(33) 31.08.92	Lyon (Fra)
4	Gonzalo **MONTIEL**	(29) 01.01.97	River Plate
6	Lisandro **MARTINEZ**	(28) 18.01.98	Manchester United (Eng)
13	Cristian **ROMERO**	(28) 27.04.98	Tottenham Hotspur (Eng)
19	Nicolas **OTAMENDI**	(38) 12.02.88	Benfica (Por)
25	Facundo **MEDINA**	(27) 28.05.99	Marseille (Fra)
26	Nahuel **MOLINA**	(28) 06.04.98	Atletico Madrid (Spa)

MIDFIELDERS

5	Leandro **PAREDES**	(31) 29.06.94	Boca Juniors
7	Rodrigo **DE PAUL**	(32) 24.05.94	Inter Miami (USA)
8	Valentin **BARCO**	(21) 23.07.04	Strasbourg (Fra)
11	Giovani **LO CELSO**	(30) 09.04.96	Real Betis (Spa)
14	Exequiel **PALACIOS**	(27) 05.10.98	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)
15	Nicolas **GONZALEZ**	(28) 06.04.98	Atletico Madrid (Spa)
18	Nicolas **PAZ**	(21) 08.09.04	Como (Ita)
20	Alexis **MAC ALLISTER**	(27) 24.12.98	Liverpool (Eng)
24	Enzo **FERNANDEZ**	(25) 17.01.01	Chelsea (Eng)

FORWARDS

9	Julian **ALVAREZ**	(26) 31.01.00	Atletico Madrid (Spa)
10	Lionel **MESSI**	(38) 24.06.87	Inter Miami (USA)
16	Thiago **ALMADA**	(25) 26.04.01	Atletico Madrid (Spa)
17	Giuliano **SIMEONE**	(23) 18.12.02	Atletico Madrid (Spa)
21	Jose Manuel **LOPEZ**	(25) 06.12.00	Palmeiras (Bra)
22	Lautaro **MARTINEZ**	(28) 22.08.97	Internazionale (Ita)

COACH

Lionel **SCALONI**	(48) 16.05.78	

AUSTRALIA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Mathew **RYAN**	(34) 08.04.92	Levante (Spa)
12	Paul **IZZO**	(31) 06.01.95	Randers (Den)
18	Patrick **BEACH**	(22) 06.08.03	Melbourne City

DEFENDERS

2	Milos **DEGENEK**	(32) 28.04.94	APOEL (Cyp)
3	Alessandro **CIRCATI**	(22) 10.10.03	Parma (Ita)
4	Jacob **ITALIANO**	(24) 30.07.01	Grazer AK (Aut)
5	Jordan **BOS**	(23) 29.10.02	Feyenoord (Ned)
6	Jason **GERIA**	(33) 10.05.93	Albirex Niigata (Jpn)
15	Kai **TREWIN**	(25) 18.05.01	New York City FC (USA)
16	Aziz **BEHICH**	(35) 16.12.90	Melbourne City
19	Harry **SOUTTAR**	(27) 22.10.98	Leicester City (Eng)
21	Cameron **BURGESS**	(30) 21.10.95	Swansea City (Wal)
25	Lucas **HERRINGTON**	(18) 05.09.07	Colorado Rapids (USA)

MIDFIELDERS

8	Connor **METCALFE**	(26) 05.11.99	St Pauli (Ger)
10	Ajdin **HRUSTIC**	(29) 05.07.96	Heracles Almelo (Ned)
13	Aiden **O'NEILL**	(27) 04.07.98	New York City FC (USA)
14	Cameron **DEVLIN**	(28) 07.06.98	Hearts (Sco)
22	Jackson **IRVINE**	(33) 07.03.93	St Pauli (Ger)
24	Paul **OKON-ENGSTLER**	(21) 24.01.05	Sydney FC

FORWARDS

7	Mathew **LECKIE**	(35) 04.02.91	Melbourne City
9	Mohamed **TOURE**	(22) 26.03.04	Norwich City (Eng)
11	Awer **MABIL**	(30) 15.09.95	Castellon (Spa)
17	Nestory **IRANKUNDA**	(20) 09.02.06	Watford (Eng)
20	Cristian **VOLPATO**	(22) 15.11.03	Sassuolo (Ita)
23	Nishan **VELUPILLAY**	(25) 07.05.01	Melbourne Victory
26	Tete **YENGI**	(25) 28.11.00	Machida Zelvia (Jpn)

COACH

Tony **POPOVIC**	(52) 04.07.73	

AUSTRIA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Alexander **SCHLAGER**	(30) 01.02.96	Red Bull Salzburg
12	Florian **WIEGELE**	(25) 21.03.01	Viktoria Plzen (Cze)
13	Patrick **PENTZ**	(29) 02.01.97	Brondby (Den)

DEFENDERS

2	David **AFFENGRUBER**	(25) 19.03.01	Elche (Spa)
3	Kevin **DANSO**	(27) 19.09.98	Tottenham Hotspur (Eng)
5	Stefan **POSCH**	(29) 14.05.97	Mainz (Ger)
8	David **ALABA**	(33) 24.06.92	Real Madrid (Spa)
15	Philipp **LIENHART**	(29) 11.07.96	Freiburg (Ger)
16	Phillipp **MWENE**	(32) 29.01.94	Mainz (Ger)
23	Marco **FRIEDL**	(28) 16.03.98	Werder Bremen (Ger)
25	Michael **SVOBODA**	(27) 15.10.98	Venezia (Ita)

MIDFIELDERS

4	Xaver **SCHLAGER**	(28) 28.09.97	RB Leipzig (Ger)
6	Nicolas **SEIWALD**	(25) 04.05.01	RB Leipzig (Ger)
9	Marcel **SABITZER**	(32) 17.03.94	Borussia Dortmund (Ger)
10	Florian **GRILLITSCH**	(30) 07.08.95	Braga (Por)
17	Carney **CHUKWUEMEKA**	(22) 20.10.03	Borussia Dortmund (Ger)
18	Romano **SCHMID**	(26) 27.01.00	Werder Bremen (Ger)
19	Dejan **LJUBICIC**	(28) 08.10.97	Schalke (Ger)
20	Konrad **LAIMER**	(29) 27.05.97	Bayern Munich (Ger)
22	Alexander **PRASS**	(25) 26.05.01	Hoffenheim (Ger)
24	Paul **WANNER**	(20) 23.12.05	PSV (Ned)
26	Alessandro **SCHOPF**	(32) 07.02.94	Wolfsberger

FORWARDS

7	Marko **ARNAUTOVIC**	(37) 19.04.89	Red Star Belgrade (Srb)
11	Michael **GREGORITSCH**	(32) 18.04.94	Augsburg (Ger)
14	Sasa **KALAJDZIC**	(28) 07.07.97	LASK
21	Patrick **WIMMER**	(25) 30.05.01	Wolfsburg (Ger)

COACH

Ralf **RANGNICK** (Ger)	(67) 29.06.58	

BELGIUM

GOALKEEPERS

1	Thibaut **COURTOIS**	(34) 11.05.92	Real Madrid (Spa)
12	Senne **LAMMENS**	(23) 07.07.02	Manchester United (Eng)
13	Mike **PENDERS**	(20) 31.07.05	Strasbourg (Fra)

DEFENDERS

2	Zeno **DEBAST**	(22) 24.10.03	Sporting (Por)
3	Arthur **THEATE**	(26) 25.05.00	Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)
4	Brandon **MECHELE**	(33) 28.01.93	Club Brugge
5	Maxim **DE CUYPER**	(25) 22.12.00	Brighton (Eng)
15	Thomas **MEUNIER**	(34) 12.09.91	Lille (Fra)
16	Koni **DE WINTER**	(23) 12.06.02	Milan (Ita)
18	Joaquin **SEYS**	(21) 28.03.05	Club Brugge
21	Timothy **CASTAGNE**	(30) 05.12.95	Fulham (Eng)
25	Nathan **NGOY**	(23) 10.06.03	Lille (Fra)

MIDFIELDERS

6	Axel **WITSEL**	(37) 12.01.89	Girona (Spa)
7	Kevin **DE BRUYNE**	(34) 28.06.91	Napoli (Ita)
8	Youri **TIELEMANS**	(29) 07.05.97	Aston Villa (Eng)
19	Diego **MOREIRA**	(21) 06.08.04	Strasbourg (Fra)
20	Hans **VANAKEN**	(33) 24.08.92	Club Brugge
22	Alexis **SAELEMAEKERS**	(26) 27.06.99	Milan (Ita)
23	Nicolas **RASKIN**	(25) 23.02.01	Rangers (Sco)
24	Amadou **ONANA**	(24) 16.08.01	Aston Villa (Eng)

FORWARDS

9	Romelu **LUKAKU**	(33) 13.05.93	Napoli (Ita)
10	Leandro **TROSSARD**	(31) 04.12.94	Arsenal (Eng)
11	Jeremy **DOKU**	(24) 27.05.02	Manchester City (Eng)
14	Dodi **LUKEBAKIO**	(28) 24.09.97	Benfica (Por)
17	Charles **DE KETELAERE**	(25) 10.03.01	Atalanta (Ita)
26	Matias **FERNANDEZ-PARDO**	(21) 03.02.05	Lille (Fra)

COACH

Rudi **GARCIA** (Fra)	(62) 20.02.64	

BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Nikola **VASILJ**	(30) 02.12.95	St Pauli (Ger)
12	Mladen **JURKAS**	(18) 07.10.07	Borac Banja Luka
22	Martin **ZLOMISLIC**	(27) 16.08.98	Rijeka (Cro)

DEFENDERS

2	Nihad **MUJAKIC**	(28) 15.04.98	Gaziantep (Tur)
3	Dennis **HADZIKADUNIC**	(27) 09.07.98	Sampdoria (Ita)
4	Tarik **MUHAREMOVIC**	(23) 28.02.03	Sassuolo (Ita)
5	Sead **KOLASINAC**	(32) 20.06.93	Atalanta (Ita)
7	Amar **DEDIC**	(23) 18.08.02	Benfica (Por)
18	Nikola **KATIC**	(29) 10.10.96	Schalke (Ger)
21	Stjepan **RADELJIC**	(28) 05.09.97	Rijeka (Cro)
24	Arjan **MALIC**	(20) 28.08.05	Sturm Graz (Aut)

MIDFIELDERS

6	Benjamin **TAHIROVIC**	(23) 03.03.03	Brondby (Den)
8	Armin **GIGOVIC**	(24) 06.04.02	Young Boys (Sui)
13	Ivan **BASIC**	(24) 30.04.02	Astana (Kaz)
14	Ivan **SUNJIC**	(29) 09.10.96	Pafos (Cyp)
15	Amar **MEMIC**	(25) 20.01.01	Viktoria Plzen (Cze)
16	Amir **HADZIAHMETOVIC**	(29) 08.03.97	Hull City (Eng)
17	Dzenis **BURNIC**	(28) 22.05.98	Karlsruhe (Ger)
19	Kerim **ALAJBEGOVIC**	(18) 21.09.07	Red Bull Salzburg (Aut)
20	Esmir **BAJRAKTAREVIC**	(21) 10.03.05	PSV (Ned)
26	Ermin **MAHMIC**	(21) 14.03.05	Slovan Liberec (Cze)

FORWARDS

9	Samed **BAZDAR**	(22) 31.01.04	Jagiellonia Bialystok (Pol)
10	Ermedin **DEMIROVIC**	(28) 25.03.98	Stuttgart (Ger)
11	Edin **DZEKO**	(40) 17.03.86	Schalke (Ger)
23	Haris **TABAKOVIC**	(31) 20.06.94	Borussia M'gladbach (Ger)
25	Jovo **LUKIC**	(27) 28.11.98	Universitatea Cluj (Rou)

COACH

Sergej **BARBAREZ**	(54) 17.09.71	

BRAZIL

GOALKEEPERS

1	**ALISSON**	(33) 02.10.92	Liverpool (Eng)
12	**WEVERTON**	(38) 13.12.87	Gremio
23	**EDERSON**	(32) 17.08.93	Fenerbahce (Tur)

DEFENDERS

3	**GABRIEL**	(28) 19.12.97	Arsenal (Eng)
4	**MARQUINHOS**	(32) 14.05.94	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)
6	**ALEX SANDRO**	(35) 26.01.91	Flamengo
13	**DANILO**	(34) 15.07.91	Flamengo
14	**BREMER**	(29) 18.03.97	Juventus (Ita)
15	**LEO PEREIRA**	(30) 31.01.96	Flamengo
16	**DOUGLAS SANTOS**	(32) 22.03.94	Zenit (Rus)
24	Roger **IBANEZ**	(27) 23.11.98	Al Ahli (KSA)

MIDFIELDERS

2	**EDERSON SILVA**	(26) 07.07.99	Atalanta (Ita)
5	**CASEMIRO**	(34) 23.02.92	Manchester United (Eng)
8	**BRUNO GUIMARAES**	(28) 16.11.97	Newcastle United (Eng)
17	**FABINHO**	(32) 23.10.93	Al Ittihad (KSA)
18	**DANILO SANTOS**	(25) 29.04.01	Botafogo
20	Lucas **PAQUETA**	(28) 27.08.97	Flamengo

FORWARDS

7	**VINICIUS JUNIOR**	(25) 12.07.00	Real Madrid (Spa)
9	**MATHEUS CUNHA**	(27) 27.05.99	Manchester United (Eng)
10	**NEYMAR**	(34) 05.02.92	Santos
11	**RAPHINHA**	(29) 14.12.96	Barcelona (Spa)
19	**ENDRICK**	(19) 21.07.06	Lyon (Fra)
21	**LUIZ HENRIQUE**	(25) 02.01.01	Zenit (Rus)
22	Gabriel **MARTINELLI**	(24) 18.06.01	Arsenal (Eng)
25	**IGOR THIAGO**	(24) 26.06.01	Brentford (Eng)
26	**RAYAN**	(19) 03.08.06	Bournemouth (Eng)

COACH

Carlo **ANCELOTTI** (Ita)	(67) 10.06.59	

CANADA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Dayne **ST CLAIR**	(29) 09.05.97	Inter Miami (USA)
16	Maxime **CREPEAU**	(32) 11.05.94	Orlando City (USA)
18	Owen **GOODMAN**	(22) 27.11.03	Barnsley (Eng)

DEFENDERS

2	Alistair **JOHNSTON**	(27) 08.10.98	Celtic (Sco)
3	Alfie **JONES**	(28) 07.10.97	Middlesbrough (Eng)
4	Luc **DE FOUGEROLLES**	(20) 12.10.05	Dender (Bel)
5	Joel **WATERMAN**	(30) 24.01.96	Chicago Fire (USA)
13	Derek **CORNELIUS**	(28) 25.11.97	Rangers (Sco)
15	Moise **BOMBITO**	(26) 30.03.00	Nice (Fra)
19	Alphonso **DAVIES**	(25) 02.11.00	Bayern Munich (Ger)
22	Richie **LARYEA**	(31) 07.01.95	Toronto FC

MIDFIELDERS

6	Mathieu **CHOINIERE**	(27) 07.02.99	LAFC (USA)
7	Stephen **EUSTAQUIO**	(29) 21.12.96	LAFC (USA)
8	Ismael **KONE**	(23) 16.06.02	Sassuolo (Ita)
11	Liam **MILLAR**	(26) 27.09.99	Hull City (Eng)
14	Jacob **SHAFFELBURG**	(26) 26.11.99	LAFC (USA)
17	Tajon **BUCHANAN**	(27) 08.02.99	Villarreal (Spa)
20	Ali **AHMED**	(25) 10.10.00	Norwich City (Eng)
21	Jonathan **OSORIO**	(33) 12.06.92	Toronto FC
23	Niko **SIGUR**	(22) 09.09.03	Hajduk Split (Cro)
25	Nathan **SALIBA**	(22) 07.02.04	Anderlecht (Bel)
26	Jayden **NELSON**	(23) 26.09.02	Austin FC (USA)

FORWARDS

9	Cyle **LARIN**	(31) 17.04.95	Southampton (Eng)
10	Jonathan **DAVID**	(26) 14.01.00	Juventus (Ita)
12	Tani **OLUWASEYI**	(26) 15.05.00	Villarreal (Spa)
24	Promise **DAVID**	(24) 03.07.01	Union Saint-Gilloise (Bel)

COACH

Jesse **MARSCH** (USA)	(52) 08.11.73	

CAPE VERDE

GOALKEEPERS

1	**VOZINHA**	(40) 03.06.86	Chaves (Por)
12	Marcio **ROSA**	(29) 23.02.97	Montana (Bul)
23	CJ **DOS SANTOS**	(25) 24.08.00	San Diego (USA)

DEFENDERS

2	**STOPIRA**	(38) 20.05.88	Torreense (Por)
3	**DINEY BORGES**	(31) 17.01.95	Al Bataeh (UAE)
4	Roberto **PICO LOPES**	(33) 17.06.92	Shamrock Rovers (Irl)
5	Logan **COSTA**	(25) 01.04.01	Villarreal (Spa)
8	**JOAO PAULO**	(28) 26.05.98	FCSB (Rou)
13	Sidny Lopes **CABRAL**	(23) 18.09.02	Benfica (Por)
22	Steven **MOREIRA**	(31) 13.08.94	Columbus Crew (USA)
24	Wagner **PINA**	(23) 03.11.02	Trabzonspor (Tur)
25	Kelvin **PIRES**	(26) 05.06.00	SJK (Fin)

MIDFIELDERS

6	Kevin **PINA**	(29) 27.01.97	Krasnodar (Rus)
10	Jamiro **MONTEIRO**	(32) 23.11.93	PEC Zwolle (Ned)
14	Deroy **DUARTE**	(26) 04.07.99	Ludogorets (Bul)
15	Laros **DUARTE**	(29) 28.02.97	Puskas Akademia (Hun)
16	Yannick **SEMEDO**	(30) 29.12.95	Farense (Por)
18	Telmo **ARCANJO**	(24) 21.06.01	Vitoria Guimaraes (Por)
20	Ryan **MENDES**	(36) 08.01.90	Igdir (Tur)

FORWARDS

7	Jovane **CABRAL**	(27) 14.06.98	Estrela Amadora (Por)
9	Gilson **BENCHIMOL**	(24) 29.12.01	Akron Tolyatti (Rus)
11	Garry **RODRIGUES**	(35) 27.11.90	Apollon Limassol (Cyp)
17	Willy **SEMEDO**	(32) 27.04.94	Omonia (Cyp)
19	Dailon **LIVRAMENTO**	(25) 04.05.01	Casa Pia (Por)
21	Nuno **DA COSTA**	(35) 10.02.91	Istanbul Basaksehir (Tur)
26	Helio **VARELA**	(24) 03.05.02	Maccabi Tel Aviv (Isr)

COACH

BUBISTA	(56) 06.01.70	

COLOMBIA

GOALKEEPERS

1	David **OSPINA**	(37) 31.08.88	Atletico Nacional
12	Camilo **VARGAS**	(37) 09.03.89	Atlas (Mex)
24	Alvaro **MONTERO**	(31) 29.03.95	Velez Sarsfield (Arg)

DEFENDERS

2	Daniel **MUNOZ**	(30) 26.05.96	Crystal Palace (Eng)
3	Jhon **LUCUMI**	(27) 26.06.98	Bologna (Ita)
4	Santiago **ARIAS**	(34) 13.01.92	Independiente (Arg)
13	Yerry **MINA**	(31) 23.09.94	Cagliari (Ita)
17	Johan **MOJICA**	(33) 21.08.92	Mallorca (Spa)
18	Willer **DITTA**	(28) 23.01.98	Cruz Azul (Mex)
22	Deiver **MACHADO**	(32) 02.09.93	Nantes (Fra)
23	Davinson **SANCHEZ**	(29) 12.06.96	Galatasaray (Tur)

MIDFIELDERS

5	Kevin **CASTANO**	(25) 29.09.00	River Plate (Arg)
6	Richard **RIOS**	(26) 02.06.00	Benfica (Por)
8	Jorge **CARRASCAL**	(28) 25.05.98	Flamengo (Bra)
10	**JAMES** Rodriguez	(34) 12.07.91	Minnesota United (USA)
11	Jhon **ARIAS**	(28) 21.09.97	Palmeiras (Bra)
14	Gustavo **PUERTA**	(22) 23.07.03	Racing Santander (Spa)
15	Juan **PORTILLA**	(27) 12.09.98	Athletico Paranaense (Bra)
16	Jefferson **LERMA**	(31) 25.10.94	Crystal Palace (Eng)
20	Juan Fernando **QUINTERO**	(33) 18.01.93	River Plate (Arg)

FORWARDS

7	Luis **DIAZ**	(29) 13.01.97	Bayern Munich (Ger)
9	Jhon **CORDOBA**	(33) 11.05.93	Krasnodar (Rus)
19	Cucho **HERNANDEZ**	(27) 20.04.99	Real Betis (Spa)
21	Jaminton **CAMPAZ**	(26) 24.05.00	Rosario Central (Arg)
25	Luis **SUAREZ**	(28) 02.12.97	Sporting (Por)
26	Andres **GOMEZ**	(23) 12.09.02	Vasco da Gama (Bra)

COACH

Nestor **LORENZO** (Arg)	(60) 26.02.66	

CROATIA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Dominik **LIVAKOVIC**	(31) 09.01.95	Dinamo Zagreb
12	Ivor **PANDUR**	(26) 25.03.00	Hull City (Eng)
23	Dominik **KOTARSKI**	(26) 10.02.00	Copenhagen (Den)

DEFENDERS

2	Josip **STANISIC**	(26) 02.04.00	Bayern Munich (Ger)
3	Marin **PONGRACIC**	(28) 11.09.97	Fiorentina (Ita)
4	Josko **GVARDIOL**	(24) 23.01.02	Manchester City (Eng)
5	Duje **CALETA-CAR**	(29) 17.09.96	Real Sociedad (Spa)
6	Josip **SUTALO**	(26) 28.02.00	Ajax (Ned)
18	Kristijan **JAKIC**	(29) 14.05.97	Augsburg (Ger)
22	Luka **VUSKOVIC**	(19) 24.02.07	Hamburg (Ger)
25	Martin **ERLIC**	(28) 24.01.98	Midtjylland (Den)

MIDFIELDERS

7	Nikola **MORO**	(28) 12.03.98	Bologna (Ita)
8	Mateo **KOVACIC**	(32) 06.05.94	Manchester City (Eng)
10	Luka **MODRIC**	(40) 09.09.85	Milan (Ita)
13	Nikola **VLASIC**	(28) 04.10.97	Torino (Ita)
15	Mario **PASALIC**	(31) 09.02.95	Atalanta (Ita)
16	Martin **BATURINA**	(23) 16.02.03	Como (Ita)
17	Petar **SUCIC**	(22) 25.10.03	Internazionale (Ita)
19	Toni **FRUK**	(25) 09.03.01	Rijeka
21	Luka **SUCIC**	(23) 08.09.02	Real Sociedad (Spa)

FORWARDS

9	Andrej **KRAMARIC**	(34) 19.06.91	Hoffenheim (Ger)
11	Ante **BUDIMIR**	(34) 22.07.91	Osasuna (Spa)
14	Ivan **PERISIC**	(37) 02.02.89	PSV (Ned)
20	Igor **MATANOVIC**	(23) 31.03.03	Freiburg (Ger)
24	Marco **PASALIC**	(25) 14.09.00	Orlando City (USA)
26	Petar **MUSA**	(28) 04.03.98	FC Dallas (USA)

COACH

Zlatko **DALIC**	(59) 26.10.66	

CURACAO

GOALKEEPERS

1	Eloy **ROOM**	(37) 06.02.89	Miami FC (USA)
25	Tyrick **BODAK**	(24) 15.05.02	Telstar (Ned)
26	Trevor **DOORNBUSCH**	(26) 06.07.99	VVV Venlo (Ned)

DEFENDERS

2	Shurandy **SAMBO**	(24) 19.08.01	Sparta Rotterdam (Ned)
3	Jurien **GAARI**	(32) 23.12.93	Abha (KSA)
4	Roshon **VAN EIJMA**	(28) 09.06.98	RKC Waalwijk (Ned)
5	Sherel **FLORANUS**	(27) 23.08.98	PEC Zwolle (Ned)
18	Armando **OBISPO**	(27) 05.03.99	PSV (Ned)
20	Joshua **BRENET**	(32) 20.03.94	Kayserispor (Tur)
23	Riechedly **BAZOER**	(29) 12.10.96	Konyaspor (Tur)
24	Deveron **FONVILLE**	(23) 16.05.03	NEC Nijmegen (Ned)

MIDFIELDERS

6	Godfried **ROEMERATOE**	(26) 19.08.99	RKC Waalwijk (Ned)
7	Juninho **BACUNA**	(28) 07.08.97	Volendam (Ned)
8	Livano **COMENENCIA**	(22) 03.02.04	Zurich (Sui)
10	Leandro **BACUNA**	(34) 21.08.91	Igdir (Tur)
15	Arjany **MARTHA**	(22) 04.09.03	Rotherham United (Eng)
21	Tahith **CHONG**	(26) 04.12.99	Sheffield United (Eng)
22	Kevin **FELIDA**	(26) 11.11.99	Den Bosch (Ned)

FORWARDS

9	Jurgen **LOCADIA**	(32) 07.11.93	Miami FC (USA)
11	Jeremy **ANTONISSE**	(24) 29.03.02	Kifisia (Gre)
12	Sontje **HANSEN**	(24) 18.05.02	Middlesbrough (Eng)
13	Tyrese **NOSLIN**	(23) 11.09.02	Telstar (Ned)
14	Kenji **GORRE**	(31) 29.09.94	Maccabi Haifa (Isr)
16	Jearl **MARGARITHA**	(26) 10.04.00	Beveren (Bel)
17	Brandley **KUWAS**	(33) 19.09.92	Volendam (Ned)
19	Gervane **KASTANEER**	(30) 09.06.96	Terengganu (Mas)

COACH

Dick **ADVOCAAT** (Ned)	(78) 27.09.47	

CZECH REPUBLIC

GOALKEEPERS

1	Matej **KOVAR**	(26) 17.05.00	PSV (Ned)
16	Jindrich **STANEK**	(30) 27.04.96	Slavia Prague
23	Lukas **HORNICEK**	(23) 13.07.02	Braga (Por)

DEFENDERS

2	David **ZIMA**	(25) 08.11.00	Slavia Prague
3	Tomas **HOLES**	(33) 31.03.93	Slavia Prague
4	Robin **HRANAC**	(26) 29.01.00	Hoffenheim (Ger)
5	Vladimir **COUFAL**	(33) 22.08.92	Hoffenheim (Ger)
6	Stepan **CHALOUPEK**	(23) 08.03.03	Slavia Prague
7	Ladislav **KREJCI**	(27) 20.04.99	Wolverhampton Wanderers (Eng)
14	David **JURASEK**	(25) 07.08.00	Slavia Prague
20	Jaroslav **ZELENY**	(33) 20.08.92	Sparta Prague
21	David **DOUDERA**	(28) 31.05.98	Slavia Prague

MIDFIELDERS

8	Vladimir **DARIDA**	(35) 08.08.90	Hradec Kralove
12	Lukas **CERV**	(25) 10.04.01	Viktoria Plzen
15	Pavel **SULC**	(25) 29.12.00	Lyon (Fra)
17	Lukas **PROVOD**	(29) 23.10.96	Slavia Prague
18	Michal **SADILEK**	(27) 31.05.99	Slavia Prague
22	Tomas **SOUCEK**	(31) 27.02.95	West Ham United (Eng)
24	Alexandr **SOJKA**	(23) 02.04.03	Viktoria Plzen
25	Hugo **SOCHUREK**	(18) 07.06.08	Sparta Prague
26	Denis **VISINSKY**	(23) 21.03.03	Viktoria Plzen

FORWARDS

9	Adam **HLOZEK**	(23) 25.07.02	Hoffenheim (Ger)
10	Patrik **SCHICK**	(30) 24.01.96	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)
11	Jan **KUCHTA**	(29) 08.01.97	Sparta Prague
13	Mojmir **CHYTIL**	(27) 29.04.99	Slavia Prague
19	Tomas **CHORY**	(31) 26.01.95	Slavia Prague

COACH

Miroslav **KOUBEK**	(74) 01.09.51	

DR CONGO

GOALKEEPERS

1	Lionel **MPASI**	(31) 01.08.94	Le Havre (Fra)
16	Timothy **FAYULU**	(26) 24.07.99	Noah (Arm)
21	Matthieu **EPOLO**	(21) 15.01.05	Standard Liege (Bel)

DEFENDERS

2	Aaron **WAN-BISSAKA**	(28) 26.11.97	West Ham United (Eng)
3	Steve **KAPUADI**	(28) 30.04.98	Widzew Lodz (Pol)
4	Axel **TUANZEBE**	(28) 14.11.97	Burnley (Eng)
5	Dylan **BATUBINSIKA**	(30) 15.02.96	AEL (Gre)
12	Joris **KAYEMBE**	(31) 08.08.94	Genk (Bel)
22	Chancel **MBEMBA**	(31) 08.08.94	Lille (Fra)
24	Gedeon **KALULU**	(28) 29.08.97	Aris Limassol (Cyp)
26	Arthur **MASUAKU**	(32) 07.11.93	Lens (Fra)

MIDFIELDERS

6	Ngal'ayel **MUKAU**	(21) 03.11.04	Lille (Fra)
7	Nathanael **MBUKU**	(24) 16.03.02	Montpellier (Fra)
8	Samuel **MOUTOUSSAMY**	(29) 12.08.96	Atromitos (Gre)
11	Gael **KAKUTA**	(34) 21.06.91	AEL (Gre)
14	Noah **SADIKI**	(21) 17.12.04	Sunderland (Eng)
15	Aaron **TSHIBOLA**	(31) 02.01.95	Kilmarnock (Sco)
18	Charles **PICKEL**	(29) 15.05.97	Espanyol (Spa)
25	Edo **KAYEMBE**	(28) 03.06.98	Watford (Eng)

FORWARDS

9	Brian **CIPENGA**	(28) 11.03.98	Castellon (Spa)
10	Theo **BONGONDA**	(30) 20.11.95	Spartak Moscow (Rus)
13	Meschack **ELIA**	(28) 06.08.97	Alanyaspor (Tur)
17	Cedric **BAKAMBU**	(35) 11.04.91	Real Betis (Spa)
19	Fiston **MAYELE**	(31) 24.06.94	Pyramids (Egy)
20	Yoane **WISSA**	(29) 03.09.96	Newcastle United (Eng)
23	Simon **BANZA**	(29) 13.08.96	Al Jazira (UAE)

COACH

Sebastien **DESABRE** (Fra)	(49) 02.08.76	

ECUADOR

GOALKEEPERS

1	Hernan **GALINDEZ**	(39) 30.03.87	Huracan (Arg)
12	Moises **RAMIREZ**	(25) 09.09.00	Kifisia (Gre)
22	Gonzalo **VALLE**	(30) 28.02.96	LDU Quito

DEFENDERS

2	Felix **TORRES**	(29) 11.01.97	Internacional (Bra)
3	Piero **HINCAPIE**	(24) 09.01.02	Arsenal (Eng)
4	Joel **ORDONEZ**	(22) 21.04.04	Club Brugge (Bel)
6	Willian **PACHO**	(24) 16.10.01	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)
7	Pervis **ESTUPINAN**	(28) 21.01.98	Milan (Ita)
17	Angelo **PRECIADO**	(28) 18.02.98	Atletico Mineiro (Bra)
25	Jackson **POROZO**	(25) 04.08.00	Tijuana (Mex)
26	Yaimar **MEDINA**	(21) 05.11.04	Genk (Bel)

MIDFIELDERS

5	Jordy **ALCIVAR**	(26) 05.08.99	Independiente del Valle
8	Anthony **VALENCIA**	(22) 21.07.03	Royal Antwerp (Bel)
9	John **YEBOAH**	(25) 23.06.00	Venezia (Ita)
10	Kendry **PAEZ**	(19) 04.05.07	River Plate (Arg)
14	Alan **MINDA**	(23) 14.05.03	Atletico Mineiro (Bra)
15	Pedro **VITE**	(24) 09.03.02	Pumas UNAM (Mex)
18	Denil **CASTILLO**	(22) 24.03.04	Midtjylland (Den)
20	Nilson **ANGULO**	(22) 19.06.03	Sunderland (Eng)
21	Alan **FRANCO**	(27) 21.08.98	Atletico Mineiro (Bra)
23	Moises **CAICEDO**	(24) 02.11.01	Chelsea (Eng)

FORWARDS

11	Kevin **RODRIGUEZ**	(26) 04.03.00	Union Saint-Gilloise (Bel)
13	Enner **VALENCIA**	(36) 04.11.89	Pachuca (Mex)
16	Jordy **CAICEDO**	(28) 18.11.97	Huracan (Arg)
19	Gonzalo **PLATA**	(25) 01.11.00	Flamengo (Bra)
24	Jeremy **AREVALO**	(21) 19.03.05	Stuttgart (Ger)

COACH

Sebastian **BECCACECE** (Arg)	(45) 17.12.80	

EGYPT

GOALKEEPERS

1	Mohamed **EL SHENAWY**	(37) 18.12.88	Al Ahly
16	Mahdy **SOLIMAN**	(39) 08.06.87	Zamalek
23	Mostafa **SHOUBIR**	(26) 15.05.00	Al Ahly
26	Mohamed **ALAA**	(27) 01.01.99	El Gouna

DEFENDERS

2	Yasser **IBRAHIM**	(33) 10.02.93	Al Ahly
3	Mohamed **HANY**	(30) 02.02.96	Al Ahly
4	Hossam **ABDELMAGUID**	(25) 30.04.01	Zamalek
5	Ramy **RABIA**	(33) 20.05.93	Al Ain (UAE)
6	Mohamed **ABDELMONEIM**	(27) 01.02.99	Nice (Fra)
13	Ahmed **FATOUH**	(28) 22.03.98	Zamalek
15	Karim **HAFEZ**	(30) 12.03.96	Pyramids
24	Tarek **ALAA**	(24) 05.01.02	ZED

MIDFIELDERS

8	Emam **ASHOUR**	(28) 20.02.98	Al Ahly
14	Hamdy **FATHY**	(31) 29.09.94	Al Wakrah (Qat)
17	Mohanad **LASHIN**	(30) 29.05.96	Pyramids
18	Nabil **DONGA**	(30) 06.04.96	Al Najmah (KSA)
19	Marawan **ATTIA**	(27) 01.08.98	Al Ahly
21	Mahmoud **SABER**	(24) 30.07.01	ZED

FORWARDS

7	Mahmoud **TREZEGUET**	(31) 01.10.94	Al Ahly
9	Hamza **ABDELKARIM**	(18) 01.01.08	Barcelona (Spa)
10	Mohamed **SALAH**	(33) 15.06.92	Liverpool (Eng)
11	Mostafa **ZICO**	(29) 27.04.97	Pyramids
12	Haissem **HASSAN**	(24) 08.02.02	Real Oviedo (Spa)
20	Ibrahim **ADEL**	(25) 23.04.01	Nordsjaelland (Den)
22	Omar **MARMOUSH**	(27) 07.02.99	Manchester City (Eng)
25	**ZIZO**	(30) 10.01.96	Al Ahly

COACH

Hossam **HASSAN**	(59) 10.08.66	

(Ages correct as of 11.06.26, clubs correct as of 2025-26 season)

WORLD CUP 2026

ENGLAND

GOALKEEPERS

1	Jordan **PICKFORD**	(32) 07.03.94	Everton
13	Dean **HENDERSON**	(29) 12.03.97	Crystal Palace
23	James **TRAFFORD**	(23) 10.10.02	Manchester City

DEFENDERS

2	Ezri **KONSA**	(28) 23.10.97	Aston Villa
3	Nico **O'REILLY**	(21) 21.03.05	Manchester City
5	John **STONES**	(32) 28.05.94	Manchester City
6	Marc **GUEHI**	(25) 13.07.00	Manchester City
12	Trevoh **CHALOBAH**	(26) 05.07.99	Chelsea
15	Dan **BURN**	(34) 09.05.92	Newcastle United
24	Reece **JAMES**	(26) 08.12.99	Chelsea
25	Djed **SPENCE**	(25) 09.08.00	Tottenham Hotspur
26	Jarell **QUANSAH**	(23) 29.01.03	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)

MIDFIELDERS

4	Declan **RICE**	(27) 14.01.99	Arsenal
8	Elliot **ANDERSON**	(23) 06.11.02	Nottingham Forest
10	Jude **BELLINGHAM**	(22) 29.06.03	Real Madrid (Spa)
14	Jordan **HENDERSON**	(35) 17.06.90	Brentford
16	Kobbie **MAINOO**	(21) 19.04.05	Manchester United
17	Morgan **ROGERS**	(23) 26.07.02	Aston Villa
21	Eberechi **EZE**	(27) 29.06.98	Arsenal

FORWARDS

7	Bukayo **SAKA**	(24) 05.09.01	Arsenal
9	Harry **KANE**	(32) 28.07.93	Bayern Munich (Ger)
11	Marcus **RASHFORD**	(28) 31.10.97	Barcelona (Spa)
18	Anthony **GORDON**	(25) 24.02.01	Newcastle United
19	Ollie **WATKINS**	(30) 30.12.95	Aston Villa
20	Noni **MADUEKE**	(24) 10.03.02	Arsenal
22	Ivan **TONEY**	(30) 16.03.96	Al Ahli (KSA)

COACH

Thomas **TUCHEL** (Ger)	(52) 29.08.73	

FRANCE

GOALKEEPERS

1	Brice **SAMBA**	(32) 25.04.94	Rennes
16	Mike **MAIGNAN**	(30) 03.07.95	Milan (Ita)
23	Robin **RISSER**	(21) 02.12.04	Lens

DEFENDERS

2	Malo **GUSTO**	(23) 19.05.03	Chelsea (Eng)
3	Lucas **DIGNE**	(32) 20.07.93	Aston Villa (Eng)
4	Dayot **UPAMECANO**	(27) 27.10.98	Bayern Munich (Ger)
5	Jules **KOUNDE**	(27) 12.11.98	Barcelona (Spa)
15	Ibrahima **KONATE**	(27) 25.05.99	Liverpool (Eng)
17	William **SALIBA**	(25) 24.03.01	Arsenal (Eng)
19	Theo **HERNANDEZ**	(28) 06.10.97	Al Hilal (KSA)
21	Lucas **HERNANDEZ**	(30) 14.02.96	Paris Saint-Germain
26	Maxence **LACROIX**	(26) 06.04.00	Crystal Palace (Eng)

MIDFIELDERS

6	Manu **KONE**	(25) 17.05.01	Roma (Ita)
8	Aurelien **TCHOUAMENI**	(26) 27.01.00	Real Madrid (Spa)
13	N'Golo **KANTE**	(35) 29.03.91	Fenerbahce (Tur)
14	Adrien **RABIOT**	(31) 03.04.95	Milan (Ita)
18	Warren **ZAIRE-EMERY**	(20) 08.03.06	Paris Saint-Germain

FORWARDS

7	Ousmane **DEMBELE**	(29) 15.05.97	Paris Saint-Germain
9	Marcus **THURAM**	(28) 06.08.97	Internazionale (Ita)
10	Kylian **MBAPPE**	(27) 20.12.98	Real Madrid (Spa)
11	Michael **OLISE**	(24) 12.12.01	Bayern Munich (Ger)
12	Bradley **BARCOLA**	(23) 02.09.02	Paris Saint-Germain
20	Desire **DOUE**	(21) 03.06.05	Paris Saint-Germain
22	Jean-Philippe **MATETA**	(28) 28.06.97	Crystal Palace (Eng)
24	Rayan **CHERKI**	(22) 17.08.03	Manchester City (Eng)
25	Maghnes **AKLIOUCHE**	(24) 25.02.02	Monaco

COACH

Didier **DESCHAMPS**	(57) 15.10.68	

GERMANY

GOALKEEPERS

1	Manuel **NEUER**	(40) 27.03.86	Bayern Munich
12	Oliver **BAUMANN**	(36) 02.06.90	Hoffenheim
21	Alexander **NUBEL**	(29) 30.09.96	Stuttgart

DEFENDERS

2	Antonio **RUDIGER**	(33) 03.03.93	Real Madrid (Spa)
3	Waldemar **ANTON**	(29) 20.07.96	Borussia Dortmund
4	Jonathan **TAH**	(30) 11.02.96	Bayern Munich
6	Joshua **KIMMICH**	(31) 08.02.95	Bayern Munich
15	Nico **SCHLOTTERBECK**	(26) 01.12.99	Borussia Dortmund
18	Nathaniel **BROWN**	(22) 16.06.03	Eintracht Frankfurt
22	David **RAUM**	(28) 22.04.98	RB Leipzig
24	Malick **THIAW**	(24) 08.08.01	Newcastle United (Eng)

MIDFIELDERS

5	Aleksandar **PAVLOVIC**	(22) 03.05.04	Bayern Munich
8	Leon **GORETZKA**	(31) 06.02.95	Bayern Munich
10	Jamal **MUSIALA**	(23) 26.02.03	Bayern Munich
13	Pascal **GROSS**	(34) 15.06.91	Brighton (Eng)
16	Angelo **STILLER**	(25) 04.04.01	Stuttgart
17	Florian **WIRTZ**	(23) 03.05.03	Liverpool (Eng)
20	Nadiem **AMIRI**	(29) 27.10.96	Mainz
23	Felix **NMECHA**	(25) 10.10.00	Borussia Dortmund
25	Assan **OUEDRAOGO**	(20) 09.05.06	RB Leipzig

FORWARDS

7	Kai **HAVERTZ**	(27) 11.06.99	Arsenal (Eng)
9	Jamie **LEWELING**	(25) 26.02.01	Stuttgart
11	Nick **WOLTEMADE**	(24) 14.02.02	Newcastle United (Eng)
14	Maximilian **BEIER**	(23) 17.10.02	Borussia Dortmund
19	Leroy **SANE**	(30) 11.01.96	Galatasaray (Tur)
26	Deniz **UNDAV**	(29) 19.07.96	Stuttgart

COACH

Julian **NAGELSMANN**	(38) 23.07.87	

GHANA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Lawrence **ATI ZIGI**	(29) 29.11.96	St Gallen (Sui)
12	Joseph **ANANG**	(26) 08.06.00	St Patrick's Athletic (Irl)
16	Benjamin **ASARE**	(33) 13.07.92	Hearts of Oak

DEFENDERS

2	Alidu **SEIDU**	(26) 04.06.00	Rennes (Fra)
4	Jonas **ADJETEY**	(22) 13.12.03	Wolfsburg (Ger)
6	Abdul **MUMIN**	(28) 06.06.98	Rayo Vallecano (Spa)
14	Gideon **MENSAH**	(27) 18.07.98	Auxerre (Fra)
17	Baba **RAHMAN**	(31) 02.07.94	PAOK (Gre)
18	Jerome **OPOKU**	(27) 14.10.98	Istanbul Basaksehir (Tur)
21	Kojo **PEPRAH OPPONG**	(22) 04.06.04	Nice (Fra)
23	Derrick **LUCKASSEN**	(30) 03.07.95	Pafos (Cyp)
26	Marvin **SENAYA**	(25) 28.01.01	Auxerre (Fra)

MIDFIELDERS

3	Caleb **YIRENKYI**	(20) 15.01.06	Nordsjaelland (Den)
5	Thomas **PARTEY**	(32) 13.06.93	Villarreal (Spa)
8	Kwasi **SIBO**	(27) 24.06.98	Real Oviedo (Spa)
15	Elisha **OWUSU**	(28) 07.11.97	Auxerre (Fra)
20	Augustine **BOAKYE**	(25) 03.11.00	Saint-Etienne (Fra)

FORWARDS

7	Abdul **FATAWU**	(22) 08.03.04	Leicester City (Eng)
9	Jordan **AYEW**	(34) 11.09.91	Leicester City (Eng)
10	Brandon **THOMAS-ASANTE**	(27) 29.12.98	Coventry City (Eng)
11	Antoine **SEMENYO**	(26) 07.01.00	Manchester City (Eng)
13	Christopher **BONSU BAAH**	(21) 14.12.04	Al Qadsiah (KSA)
19	Inaki **WILLIAMS**	(31) 15.06.94	Athletic Club (Spa)
22	Kamaldeen **SULEMANA**	(24) 15.02.02	Atalanta (Ita)
24	Ernest **NUAMAH**	(22) 01.11.03	Lyon (Fra)
25	Prince **ADU**	(22) 23.09.03	Viktoria Plzen (Cze)

COACH

Carlos **QUEIROZ** (Por)	(73) 01.03.53	

HAITI

GOALKEEPERS

1	Johny **PLACIDE**	(38) 29.01.88	Bastia (Fra)
12	Alexandre **PIERRE**	(25) 25.02.01	Sochaux (Fra)
23	Josue **DUVERGER**	(26) 27.04.00	Cosmos Koblenz (Ger)

DEFENDERS

2	Carlens **ARCUS**	(29) 28.06.96	Angers (Fra)
3	Keeto **THERMONCY**	(20) 29.03.06	Young Boys (Sui)
4	Ricardo **ADE**	(36) 21.05.90	LDU Quito (Ecu)
5	Hannes **DELCROIX**	(27) 28.02.99	Lugano (Sui)
8	Martin **EXPERIENCE**	(27) 09.03.99	Nancy (Fra)
13	Markhus **LACROIX**	(32) 14.10.93	Colorado Springs Switchbacks (USA)
14	Garven **METUSALA**	(26) 31.12.99	Colorado Springs Switchbacks (USA)
22	Jean-Kevin **DUVERNE**	(28) 12.07.97	Gent (Bel)
24	Wilguens **PAUGAIN**	(24) 24.08.01	Zulte Waregem (Bel)

MIDFIELDERS

6	Carl **SAINTE**	(23) 09.08.02	El Paso Locomotive (USA)
10	Jean-Ricner **BELLEGARDE**	(27) 27.06.98	Wolverhampton Wanderers (Eng)
17	Danley **JEAN-JACQUES**	(26) 20.05.00	Philadelphia Union (USA)
21	Josue **CASIMIR**	(24) 24.09.01	Auxerre (Fra)
25	Dominique **SIMON**	(25) 29.07.00	Tatran Presov (Svk)
26	Woodensky **PIERRE**	(21) 30.12.04	Violette

FORWARDS

7	Derrick **ETIENNE**	(29) 25.11.96	Toronto FC (Can)
9	Duckens **NAZON**	(32) 07.04.94	Esteghlal (Irn)
11	Louicius **DEEDSON**	(25) 11.02.01	FC Dallas (USA)
15	Ruben **PROVIDENCE**	(24) 07.07.01	Almere City (Ned)
16	Lenny **JOSEPH**	(25) 12.10.00	Ferencvaros (Hun)
18	Wilson **ISIDOR**	(25) 27.08.00	Sunderland (Eng)
19	Yassin **FORTUNE**	(27) 30.01.99	Vizela (Por)
20	Frantzdy **PIERROT**	(31) 29.03.95	Caykur Rizespor (Tur)

COACH

Sebastien **MIGNE** (Fra)	(53) 30.11.72	

IRAN

GOALKEEPERS

1	Alireza **BEIRANVAND**	(33) 21.09.92	Tractor
12	Payam **NIAZMAND**	(31) 06.04.95	Persepolis
22	Hossein **HOSSEINI**	(33) 30.06.92	Sepahan

DEFENDERS

2	Saleh **HARDANI**	(27) 26.12.98	Esteghlal
3	Ehsan **HAJISAFI**	(36) 25.02.90	Sepahan
4	Shoja **KHALILZADEH**	(37) 14.05.89	Tractor
5	Milad **MOHAMMADI**	(32) 29.09.93	Persepolis
13	Hossein **KANANI**	(32) 23.03.94	Persepolis
17	Arya **YOUSEFI**	(24) 22.04.02	Sepahan
19	Ali **NEMATI**	(30) 08.02.96	Foolad
23	Ramin **REZAEIAN**	(36) 21.03.90	Foolad
25	Danial **IRI**	(22) 26.10.03	Malavan

MIDFIELDERS

6	Saeid **EZATOLAHI**	(29) 01.10.96	Shabab Al Ahli (UAE)
14	Saman **GHODDOS**	(32) 06.09.93	Kalba (UAE)
15	Roozbeh **CHESHMI**	(32) 24.07.93	Esteghlal
21	Mohammad **GHORBANI**	(24) 07.10.01	Al Wahda (UAE)
26	Amirmohammad **RAZAGHINIA**	(20) 11.04.06	Esteghlal

FORWARDS

7	Alireza **JAHANBAKHSH**	(32) 11.08.93	Dender (Bel)
8	Mohammad **MOHEBBI**	(27) 20.12.98	Rostov (Rus)
9	Mehdi **TAREMI**	(33) 18.07.92	Olympiacos (Gre)
10	Mehdi **GHAYEDI**	(27) 05.12.98	Al Nasr (UAE)
11	Ali **ALIPOUR**	(30) 11.11.95	Persepolis
16	Mehdi **TORABI**	(31) 10.09.94	Tractor
18	Amirhossein **HOSSEINZADEH**	(25) 30.10.00	Tractor
20	Shahriyar **MOGHANLOO**	(31) 21.12.94	Kalba (UAE)
24	Dennis **DARGAHI**	(29) 09.01.97	Standard Liege (Bel)

COACH

Amir **GHALENOEI**	(62) 22.11.63	

IRAQ

GOALKEEPERS

1	Fahad **TALIB**	(31) 21.10.94	Al Talaba
12	Jalal **HASSAN**	(35) 18.05.91	Al Zawraa
22	Ahmed **BASIL**	(29) 19.08.96	Al Shorta

DEFENDERS

2	Rebin **SULAKA**	(34) 12.04.92	Port FC (Tha)
3	Hussein **ALI**	(24) 01.03.02	Pogon Szczecin (Pol)
4	Zaid **TAHSEEN**	(25) 29.01.01	Pakhtakor (Uzb)
5	Akam **HASHIM**	(27) 16.08.98	Al Zawraa
6	Munaf **YOUNUS**	(29) 16.11.96	Al Shorta
15	Ahmed **MAKNZI**	(24) 24.09.01	Al Karma
23	Merchas **DOSKI**	(26) 07.12.99	Viktoria Plzen (Cze)
25	Mustafa **SAADOON**	(25) 25.05.01	Al Shorta
26	Frans **PUTROS**	(32) 14.07.93	Persib Bandung (Idn)

MIDFIELDERS

7	Youssef **AMYN**	(22) 21.08.03	AEK Larnaca (Cyp)
8	Ibrahim **BAYESH**	(26) 01.05.00	Al Dhafra (UAE)
11	Ahmed **QASIM**	(22) 12.07.03	Nashville SC (USA)
14	Zidane **IQBAL**	(23) 27.04.03	Utrecht (Ned)
16	Amir **AL AMMARI**	(28) 27.07.97	Cracovia (Pol)
17	Ali **JASIM**	(22) 20.01.04	Al Najmah (KSA)
19	Kevin **YAKOB**	(25) 10.10.00	AGF (Den)
20	Aimar **SHER**	(23) 20.12.02	Sarpsborg (Nor)
21	Marko **FARJI**	(22) 16.03.04	Venezia (Ita)
24	Zaid **ISMAEL**	(24) 03.01.02	Al Talaba

FORWARDS

9	Ali **AL HAMADI**	(24) 01.03.02	Luton Town (Eng)
10	Mohanad **ALI**	(25) 20.06.00	Dibba (UAE)
13	Ali **YOUSIF**	(30) 19.01.96	Al Talaba
18	Aymen **HUSSEIN**	(30) 22.03.96	Al Karma

COACH

Graham **ARNOLD** (Aus)	(62) 03.08.63	

IVORY COAST

GOALKEEPERS

1	Yahia **FOFANA**	(25) 21.08.00	Caykur Rizespor (Tur)
16	Mohamed **KONE**	(24) 07.03.02	Charleroi (Bel)
23	Alban **LAFONT**	(27) 23.01.99	Panathinaikos (Gre)

DEFENDERS

2	Ousmane **DIOMANDE**	(22) 04.12.03	Sporting (Por)
3	Ghislain **KONAN**	(30) 27.12.95	Gil Vicente (Por)
5	Wilfried **SINGO**	(25) 25.12.00	Galatasaray (Tur)
7	Odilon **KOSSOUNOU**	(25) 04.01.01	Atalanta (Ita)
13	Christopher **OPERI**	(29) 29.04.97	Istanbul Basaksehir (Tur)
17	Guela **DOUE**	(23) 17.10.02	Strasbourg (Fra)
20	Emmanuel **AGBADOU**	(28) 17.06.97	Besiktas (Tur)
21	Evan **NDICKA**	(26) 20.08.99	Roma (Ita)

MIDFIELDERS

4	Jean Michael **SERI**	(34) 19.07.91	Maribor (Svn)
6	Seko **FOFANA**	(31) 07.05.95	Porto (Por)
8	Franck **KESSIE**	(29) 19.12.96	Al Ahli (KSA)
18	Ibrahim **SANGARE**	(28) 02.12.97	Nottingham Forest (Eng)
25	Parfait **GUIAGON**	(25) 22.02.01	Charleroi (Bel)
26	Christ **INAO OULAI**	(20) 06.04.06	Trabzonspor (Tur)

FORWARDS

9	Ange-Yoan **BONNY**	(22) 25.10.03	Internazionale (Ita)
10	Simon **ADINGRA**	(24) 01.01.02	Monaco (Fra)
11	Yan **DIOMANDE**	(19) 14.11.06	RB Leipzig (Ger)
12	Elye **WAHI**	(23) 02.01.03	Nice (Fra)
14	Oumar **DIAKITE**	(22) 20.12.03	Cercle Brugge (Bel)
15	**AMAD** Diallo	(23) 11.07.02	Manchester United (Eng)
19	Nicolas **PEPE**	(31) 29.05.95	Villarreal (Spa)
22	Evann **GUESSAND**	(24) 01.07.01	Crystal Palace (Eng)
24	Bazoumana **TOURE**	(20) 02.03.06	Hoffenheim (Ger)

COACH

Emerse **FAE**	(42) 24.01.84	

JAPAN

GOALKEEPERS

1	Zion **SUZUKI**	(23) 21.08.02	Parma (Ita)
12	Keisuke **OSAKO**	(26) 28.07.99	Sanfrecce Hiroshima
23	Tomoki **HAYAKAWA**	(27) 03.03.99	Kashima Antlers

DEFENDERS

2	Yukinari **SUGAWARA**	(25) 28.06.00	Werder Bremen (Ger)
3	Shogo **TANIGUCHI**	(34) 15.07.91	Sint-Truiden (Bel)
4	Ko **ITAKURA**	(29) 27.01.97	Ajax (Ned)
5	Yuto **NAGATOMO**	(39) 12.09.86	FC Tokyo
16	Tsuyoshi **WATANABE**	(29) 05.02.97	Feyenoord (Ned)
20	Ayumu **SEKO**	(26) 07.06.00	Le Havre (Fra)
21	Hiroki **ITO**	(27) 12.05.99	Bayern Munich (Ger)
22	Takehiro **TOMIYASU**	(27) 05.11.98	Ajax (Ned)
25	Junnosuke **SUZUKI**	(22) 12.07.03	Copenhagen (Den)

MIDFIELDERS

7	Ao **TANAKA**	(27) 10.09.98	Leeds United (Eng)
8	Takefusa **KUBO**	(25) 04.06.01	Real Sociedad (Spa)
10	Ritsu **DOAN**	(27) 16.06.98	Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)
13	Keito **NAKAMURA**	(25) 28.07.00	Reims (Fra)
14	Junya **ITO**	(33) 09.03.93	Genk (Bel)
15	Daichi **KAMADA**	(29) 05.08.96	Crystal Palace (Eng)
17	Yuito **SUZUKI**	(24) 25.10.01	Freiburg (Ger)
24	Kaishu **SANO**	(25) 30.12.00	Mainz (Ger)

FORWARDS

6	Shuto **MACHINO**	(26) 30.09.99	Borussia M'gladbach (Ger)
9	Keisuke **GOTO**	(21) 03.06.05	Sint-Truiden (Bel)
11	Daizen **MAEDA**	(28) 20.10.97	Celtic (Sco)
18	Ayase **UEDA**	(27) 28.08.98	Feyenoord (Ned)
19	Koki **OGAWA**	(28) 08.08.97	NEC Nijmegen (Ned)
26	Kento **SHIOGAI**	(21) 26.03.05	Wolfsburg (Ger)

COACH

Hajime **MORIYASU**	(57) 23.08.68	

JORDAN

GOALKEEPERS

1	Yazeed **ABULAILA**	(33) 08.01.93	Al Hussein
12	Nour **BANI ATEYAH**	(33) 25.01.93	Al Faisaly
22	Abdallah **AL FAKHORI**	(26) 22.01.00	Al Wehdat

DEFENDERS

2	Mohammad **ABU HASHEESH**	(31) 09.05.95	Al Karma (Irq)
3	Abdallah **NASIB**	(32) 25.02.94	Al Zawraa (Irq)
4	Husam **ABU DAHAB**	(26) 13.05.00	Al Faisaly
5	Yazan **AL ARAB**	(30) 31.01.96	FC Seoul (Kor)
16	Mohammad **ABUALNADI**	(25) 08.02.01	Selangor (Mas)
17	Saleem **OBAID**	(34) 17.01.92	Al Hussein
18	Mohammad **ABU GHOUSH**	(20) 13.07.05	Al Hussein
19	Saad **AL ROSAN**	(29) 01.02.97	Al Hussein
23	Ehsan **HADDAD**	(32) 05.02.94	Al Hussein
26	Anas **BADAWI**	(28) 13.09.97	Al Faisaly

MIDFIELDERS

6	Amer **JAMOUS**	(23) 03.07.02	Al Zawraa (Irq)
8	Noor **AL RAWABDEH**	(29) 24.02.97	Selangor (Mas)
14	Rajaei **AYED**	(32) 25.07.93	Al Hussein
15	Ibrahim **SADEH**	(26) 27.04.00	Al Karma (Irq)
20	Mohannad **ABU TAHA**	(23) 02.02.03	Al Quwa Al Jawiya (Irq)
21	Nizar **AL RASHDAN**	(27) 23.03.99	Qatar SC (Qat)
25	Mohammad **AL DAOUD**	(34) 12.04.92	Al Wehdat

FORWARDS

7	Mohammad **ABU ZRAIQ**	(28) 30.12.97	Raja Casablanca (Mar)
9	Ali **OLWAN**	(26) 26.03.00	Al Sailiya (Qat)
10	Mousa **AL TAMARI**	(29) 10.06.97	Rennes (Fra)
11	Odeh **FAKHOURY**	(20) 22.11.05	Pyramids (Egy)
13	Mahmoud **AL MARDI**	(32) 06.10.93	Al Hussein
24	Ali **AZAIZEH**	(22) 13.04.04	Al Shabab (KSA)

COACH

Jamal **SELLAMI** (Mar)	(55) 06.10.70	

MEXICO

GOALKEEPERS

1	Raul **RANGEL**	(26) 25.02.00	Guadalajara
12	Carlos **ACEVEDO**	(30) 19.04.96	Santos Laguna
13	Guillermo **OCHOA**	(40) 13.07.85	AEL Limassol (Cyp)

DEFENDERS

2	Jorge **SANCHEZ**	(28) 10.12.97	PAOK (Gre)
3	Cesar **MONTES**	(29) 24.02.97	Lokomotiv Moscow (Rus)
5	Johan **VASQUEZ**	(27) 22.10.98	Genoa (Ita)
15	Israel **REYES**	(26) 23.05.00	America
20	Mateo **CHAVEZ**	(22) 12.05.04	AZ (Ned)
23	Jesus **GALLARDO**	(31) 15.08.94	Toluca

MIDFIELDERS

4	Edson **ALVAREZ**	(28) 24.10.97	Fenerbahce (Tur)
6	Erik **LIRA**	(26) 08.05.00	Cruz Azul
7	Luis **ROMO**	(31) 05.06.95	Guadalajara
8	Alvaro **FIDALGO**	(29) 09.04.97	Real Betis (Spa)
17	Orbelin **PINEDA**	(30) 24.03.96	AEK Athens (Gre)
18	Obed **VARGAS**	(20) 05.08.05	Atletico Madrid (Spa)
19	Gilberto **MORA**	(17) 14.10.08	Tijuana
24	Luis **CHAVEZ**	(30) 15.01.96	Dynamo Moscow (Rus)
26	Brian **GUTIERREZ**	(22) 17.06.03	Guadalajara

FORWARDS

9	Raul **JIMENEZ**	(35) 05.05.91	Fulham (Eng)
10	Alexis **VEGA**	(28) 25.11.97	Toluca
11	Santiago **GIMENEZ**	(25) 18.04.01	Milan (Ita)
14	Armando **GONZALEZ**	(23) 20.04.03	Guadalajara
16	Julian **QUINONES**	(29) 24.03.97	Al Qadsiah (KSA)
21	Cesar **HUERTA**	(25) 03.12.00	Anderlecht (Bel)
22	Guillermo **MARTINEZ**	(31) 15.03.95	Pumas UNAM
25	Roberto **ALVARADO**	(27) 07.09.98	Guadalajara

COACH

Javier **AGUIRRE**	(67) 01.12.58	

MOROCCO

GOALKEEPERS

1	Yassine **BOUNOU**	(35) 05.04.91	Al Hilal (KSA)
12	**MUNIR** El Kajoui	(37) 10.05.89	RS Berkane
22	Ahmed Reda **TAGNAOUTI**	(30) 05.04.96	AS FAR

DEFENDERS

2	Achraf **HAKIMI**	(27) 04.11.98	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)
3	Noussair **MAZRAOUI**	(28) 14.11.97	Manchester United (Eng)
5	Marwane **SAADANE**	(34) 17.01.92	Al Fateh (KSA)
13	Zakaria **EL OUAHDI**	(24) 31.12.01	Genk (Bel)
14	Issa **DIOP**	(29) 09.01.97	Fulham (Eng)
18	Chadi **RIAD**	(22) 17.06.03	Crystal Palace (Eng)
19	Youssef **BELAMMARI**	(27) 20.09.98	Al Ahly (Egy)
25	Redouane **HALHAL**	(23) 05.03.03	Mechelen (Bel)
26	Anass **SALAH-EDDINE**	(24) 18.01.02	PSV (Ned)

MIDFIELDERS

4	Sofyan **AMRABAT**	(29) 21.08.96	Real Betis (Spa)
6	Ayyoub **BOUADDI**	(18) 02.10.07	Lille (Fra)
8	Azzedine **OUNAHI**	(26) 19.04.00	Girona (Spa)
15	Samir **EL MOURABET**	(20) 06.10.05	Strasbourg (Fra)
23	Bilal **EL KHANNOUSS**	(22) 10.05.04	Stuttgart (Ger)
24	Neil **EL AYNAOUI**	(24) 02.07.01	Roma (Ita)

FORWARDS

7	Chemsdine **TALBI**	(21) 09.05.05	Sunderland (Eng)
9	Soufiane **RAHIMI**	(30) 02.06.96	Al Ain (UAE)
10	**BRAHIM** Diaz	(26) 03.08.99	Real Madrid (Spa)
11	Ismael **SAIBARI**	(25) 28.01.01	PSV (Ned)
16	Gessime **YASSINE**	(20) 22.11.05	Strasbourg (Fra)
17	Amine **SBAI**	(25) 05.11.00	Angers (Fra)
20	Ayoub **EL KAABI**	(32) 25.06.93	Olympiacos (Gre)
21	Ayoube **AMAIMOUNI**	(21) 30.11.04	Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)

COACH

Mohamed **OUAHBI** (Bel)	(49) 07.09.76	

NETHERLANDS

GOALKEEPERS

1	Bart **VERBRUGGEN**	(23) 18.08.02	Brighton (Eng)
13	Robin **ROEFS**	(23) 17.01.03	Sunderland (Eng)
23	Mark **FLEKKEN**	(32) 13.06.93	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)

DEFENDERS

2	Lutsharel **GEERTRUIDA**	(25) 18.07.00	Sunderland (Eng)
4	Virgil **VAN DIJK**	(34) 08.07.91	Liverpool (Eng)
5	Nathan **AKE**	(31) 18.02.95	Manchester City (Eng)
6	Jan Paul **VAN HECKE**	(26) 08.06.00	Brighton (Eng)
15	Micky **VAN DE VEN**	(25) 19.04.01	Tottenham Hotspur (Eng)
22	Denzel **DUMFRIES**	(30) 18.04.96	Internazionale (Ita)
25	Jorrel **HATO**	(20) 07.03.06	Chelsea (Eng)

MIDFIELDERS

3	Marten **DE ROON**	(35) 29.03.91	Atalanta (Ita)
8	Ryan **GRAVENBERCH**	(24) 16.05.02	Liverpool (Eng)
12	Mats **WIEFFER**	(26) 16.11.99	Brighton (Eng)
14	Tijjani **REIJNDERS**	(27) 29.07.98	Manchester City (Eng)
16	Guus **TIL**	(28) 22.12.97	PSV
20	Teun **KOOPMEINERS**	(28) 28.02.98	Juventus (Ita)
21	Frenkie **DE JONG**	(29) 12.05.97	Barcelona (Spa)
26	Quinten **TIMBER**	(24) 17.06.01	Marseille (Fra)

FORWARDS

7	Justin **KLUIVERT**	(27) 05.05.99	Bournemouth (Eng)
9	Wout **WEGHORST**	(33) 07.08.92	Ajax
10	**MEMPHIS** Depay	(32) 13.02.94	Corinthians (Bra)
11	Cody **GAKPO**	(27) 07.05.99	Liverpool (Eng)
17	Noa **LANG**	(26) 17.06.99	Galatasaray (Tur)
18	Donyell **MALEN**	(27) 19.01.99	Roma (Ita)
19	Brian **BROBBEY**	(24) 01.02.02	Sunderland (Eng)
24	Crysencio **SUMMERVILLE**	(24) 30.10.01	West Ham United (Eng)

COACH

Ronald **KOEMAN**	(63) 21.03.63	

NEW ZEALAND

GOALKEEPERS

1	Max **CROCOMBE**	(32) 12.08.93	Millwall (Eng)
12	Alex **PAULSEN**	(23) 04.07.02	Lechia Gdansk (Pol)
22	Michael **WOUD**	(27) 16.01.99	Auckland FC

DEFENDERS

2	Tim **PAYNE**	(32) 10.01.94	Wellington Phoenix
3	Francis **DE VRIES**	(31) 28.11.94	Auckland FC
4	Tyler **BINDON**	(21) 27.01.05	Sheffield United (Eng)
5	Michael **BOXALL**	(37) 18.08.88	Minnesota United (USA)
13	Liberato **CACACE**	(25) 27.09.00	Wrexham (Wal)
15	Nando **PIJNAKER**	(27) 25.02.99	Auckland FC
16	Finn **SURMAN**	(22) 23.09.03	Portland Timbers (USA)
24	Callan **ELLIOT**	(26) 07.07.99	Auckland FC
26	Tommy **SMITH**	(36) 31.03.90	Braintree Town (Eng)

MIDFIELDERS

6	Joe **BELL**	(27) 27.04.99	Viking Stavanger (Nor)
7	Logan **ROGERSON**	(28) 28.05.98	Auckland FC
8	Marko **STAMENIC**	(24) 19.02.02	Swansea City (Wal)
10	Sarpreet **SINGH**	(27) 20.02.99	Wellington Phoenix
11	Elijah **JUST**	(26) 01.05.00	Motherwell (Sco)
14	Alex **RUFER**	(29) 12.06.96	Wellington Phoenix
19	Ben **OLD**	(23) 13.08.02	Saint-Etienne (Fra)
20	Callum **McCOWATT**	(27) 30.04.99	Silkeborg (Den)
23	Ryan **THOMAS**	(31) 20.12.94	PEC Zwolle (Ned)
25	Lachlan **BAYLISS**	(23) 24.07.02	Newcastle United Jets (Aus)

FORWARDS

9	Chris **WOOD**	(34) 07.12.91	Nottingham Forest (Eng)
17	Kosta **BARBAROUSES**	(36) 19.02.90	Western Sydney Wanderers (Aus)
18	Ben **WAINE**	(25) 11.06.01	Port Vale (Eng)
21	Jesse **RANDALL**	(23) 19.08.02	Auckland FC

COACH

Darren **BAZELEY** (Eng)	(53) 05.10.72	

NORWAY

GOALKEEPERS

1	Orjan **NYLAND**	(35) 10.09.90	Sevilla (Spa)
12	Sander **TANGVIK**	(23) 29.11.02	Hamburg (Ger)
13	Egil **SELVIK**	(28) 30.07.97	Watford (Eng)

DEFENDERS

3	Kristoffer **AJER**	(28) 17.04.98	Brentford (Eng)
4	Leo **OSTIGARD**	(26) 28.11.99	Genoa (Ita)
5	David **MOLLER WOLFE**	(24) 23.04.02	Wolverhampton Wanderers (Eng)
15	Fredrik **BJORKAN**	(27) 21.08.98	Bodo/Glimt
16	Marcus **HOLMGREN PEDERSEN**	(25) 16.07.00	Torino (Ita)
17	Torbjorn **HEGGEM**	(27) 12.01.99	Bologna (Ita)
24	Sondre **LANGAS**	(25) 02.02.01	Derby County (Eng)
25	Henrik **FALCHENER**	(23) 08.05.03	Viking Stavanger
26	Julian **RYERSON**	(28) 17.11.97	Borussia Dortmund (Ger)

MIDFIELDERS

2	Morten **THORSBY**	(30) 05.05.96	Cremonese (Ita)
6	Patrick **BERG**	(28) 24.11.97	Bodo/Glimt
8	Sander **BERGE**	(28) 14.02.98	Fulham (Eng)
10	Martin **ODEGAARD**	(27) 17.12.98	Arsenal (Eng)
14	Fredrik **AURSNES**	(30) 10.12.95	Benfica (Por)
18	Kristian **THORSTVEDT**	(27) 13.03.99	Sassuolo (Ita)
19	Thelo **AASGAARD**	(24) 02.05.02	Rangers (Sco)
22	Oscar **BOBB**	(22) 12.07.03	Fulham (Eng)
23	Jens Petter **HAUGE**	(26) 12.10.99	Bodo/Glimt

FORWARDS

7	Alexander **SORLOTH**	(30) 05.12.95	Atletico Madrid (Spa)
9	Erling **HAALAND**	(25) 21.07.00	Manchester City (Eng)
11	Jorgen **STRAND LARSEN**	(26) 06.02.00	Crystal Palace (Eng)
20	Antonio **NUSA**	(21) 17.04.05	RB Leipzig (Ger)
21	Andreas **SCHJELDERUP**	(22) 01.06.04	Benfica (Por)

COACH

Stale **SOLBAKKEN**	(58) 27.02.68	

PANAMA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Luis **MEJIA**	(35) 16.03.91	Nacional (Uru)
12	Cesar **SAMUDIO**	(32) 23.02.94	Marathon (Hon)
22	Orlando **MOSQUERA**	(31) 25.12.94	Al Fayha (KSA)

DEFENDERS

2	Cesar **BLACKMAN**	(28) 02.04.98	Slovan Bratislava (Svk)
3	Jose **CORDOBA**	(25) 03.06.01	Norwich City (Eng)
4	Fidel **ESCOBAR**	(31) 09.01.95	Saprissa (Crc)
5	Edgardo **FARINA**	(24) 19.10.01	Pari Nizhny Novgorod (Rus)
13	Jiovany **RAMOS**	(29) 26.01.97	Academia Puerto Cabello (Ven)
15	Eric **DAVIS**	(35) 31.03.91	Plaza Amador
16	Andres **ANDRADE**	(27) 16.10.98	LASK (Aut)
23	Amir **MURILLO**	(30) 11.02.96	Besiktas (Tur)
25	Roderick **MILLER**	(34) 03.04.92	Turan Tovuz (Aze)
26	Jorge **GUTIERREZ**	(27) 01.09.98	Deportivo La Guaira (Ven)

MIDFIELDERS

6	Cristian **MARTINEZ**	(29) 06.02.97	Ironi Kiryat Shmona (Isr)
7	Jose Luis **RODRIGUEZ**	(27) 19.06.98	Juarez (Mex)
8	Adalberto **CARRASQUILLA**	(27) 28.11.98	Pumas UNAM (Mex)
11	Yoel **BARCENAS**	(32) 23.10.93	Mazatlan (Mex)
14	Carlos **HARVEY**	(26) 03.02.00	Minnesota United (USA)
19	Alberto **QUINTERO**	(38) 18.12.87	Plaza Amador
20	Aniba **GODOY**	(36) 10.02.90	San Diego FC (USA)
21	Cesar **YANIS**	(30) 28.01.96	Cobresal (Chi)

FORWARDS

9	Tomas **RODRIGUEZ**	(27) 09.03.99	Saprissa (Crc)
10	Ismael **DIAZ**	(29) 12.05.97	Leon (Mex)
17	Jose **FAJARDO**	(32) 18.08.93	Universidad Catolica (Ecu)
18	Cecilio **WATERMAN**	(35) 13.04.91	Universidad de Concepcion (Chi)
24	Azarias **LONDONO**	(24) 21.06.01	Universidad Catolica (Ecu)

COACH

Thomas **CHRISTIANSEN** (Spa/Den)	(53) 11.03.73	

(Ages correct as of 11.06.26, clubs correct as of 2025–26 season)

WORLD CUP 2026

PARAGUAY

GOALKEEPERS

1	Roberto **FERNANDEZ**	(38) 29.03.88	Cerro Porteno
12	Orlando **GILL**	(26) 11.06.00	San Lorenzo (Arg)
22	Gaston **OLVEIRA**	(33) 21.04.93	Olimpia

DEFENDERS

2	Gustavo **VELAZQUEZ**	(35) 17.04.91	Cerro Porteno
3	Omar **ALDERETE**	(29) 26.12.96	Sunderland (Eng)
4	Juan Jose **CACERES**	(26) 01.06.00	Dynamo Moscow (Rus)
5	Fabian **BALBUENA**	(34) 23.08.91	Gremio (Bra)
6	Junior **ALONSO**	(33) 09.02.93	Atletico Mineiro (Bra)
13	Jose **CANALE**	(29) 20.07.96	Lanus (Arg)
15	Gustavo **GOMEZ**	(33) 06.05.93	Palmeiras (Bra)
26	Alexandro **MAIDANA**	(20) 26.07.05	Talleres (Arg)

MIDFIELDERS

8	Diego **GOMEZ**	(23) 27.03.03	Brighton (Eng)
11	**MAURICIO**	(24) 22.06.01	Palmeiras (Bra)
14	Andres **CUBAS**	(30) 11.05.96	Vancouver Whitecaps (Can)
16	Damian **BOBADILLA**	(24) 11.07.01	Sao Paulo (Bra)
17	Alejandro **ROMERO GAMARRA**	(31) 11.01.95	Al Ain (UAE)
20	Braian **OJEDA**	(25) 27.06.00	Orlando City (USA)
23	Matias **GALARZA**	(24) 11.02.02	Atlanta United (USA)

FORWARDS

7	Ramon **SOSA**	(26) 31.08.99	Palmeiras (Bra)
9	Antonio **SANABRIA**	(30) 04.03.96	Cremonese (Ita)
10	Miguel **ALMIRON**	(32) 10.02.94	Atlanta United (USA)
18	Alex **ARCE**	(30) 16.06.95	Independiente Rivadavia (Arg)
19	Julio **ENCISO**	(22) 23.01.04	Strasbourg (Fra)
21	Gabriel **AVALOS**	(34) 09.07.91	Independiente (Arg)
24	Gustavo **CABALLERO**	(24) 21.09.01	Portsmouth (Eng)
25	Isidro **PITTA**	(26) 14.08.99	Red Bull Bragantino (Bra)

COACH

Gustavo **ALFARO** (Arg)	(63) 14.08.62	

PORTUGAL

GOALKEEPERS

1	Diogo **COSTA**	(26) 19.09.99	Porto
12	Jose **SA**	(33) 17.01.93	Wolverhampton Wanderers (Eng)
22	Rui **SILVA**	(32) 07.02.94	Sporting

DEFENDERS

2	Nelson **SEMEDO**	(32) 16.11.93	Fenerbahce (Tur)
3	Ruben **DIAS**	(29) 14.05.97	Manchester City (Eng)
4	Tomas **ARAUJO**	(24) 16.05.02	Benfica
5	Diogo **DALOT**	(27) 18.03.99	Manchester United (Eng)
13	Renato **VEIGA**	(22) 29.07.03	Villarreal (Spa)
14	Goncalo **INACIO**	(24) 25.08.01	Sporting
20	Joao **CANCELO**	(32) 27.05.94	Barcelona (Spa)
25	Nuno **MENDES**	(23) 19.06.02	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)

MIDFIELDERS

6	Matheus **NUNES**	(27) 27.08.98	Manchester City (Eng)
8	Bruno **FERNANDES**	(31) 08.09.94	Manchester United (Eng)
10	Bernardo **SILVA**	(31) 10.08.94	Manchester City (Eng)
15	Joao **NEVES**	(21) 27.09.04	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)
21	Ruben **NEVES**	(29) 13.03.97	Al Hilal (KSA)
23	**VITINHA**	(26) 13.02.00	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)
24	Samu **COSTA**	(25) 27.11.00	Mallorca (Spa)

FORWARDS

7	Cristiano **RONALDO**	(41) 05.02.85	Al Nassr (KSA)
9	Goncalo **RAMOS**	(24) 20.06.01	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)
11	Joao **FELIX**	(26) 10.11.99	Al Nassr (KSA)
16	Francisco **TRINCAO**	(26) 29.12.99	Sporting
17	Rafael **LEAO**	(27) 10.06.99	Milan (Ita)
18	Pedro **NETO**	(26) 09.03.00	Chelsea (Eng)
19	Goncalo **GUEDES**	(29) 29.11.96	Real Sociedad (Spa)
26	Francisco **CONCEICAO**	(23) 14.12.02	Juventus (Ita)

COACH

Roberto **MARTINEZ** (Spa)	(52) 13.07.73	

QATAR

GOALKEEPERS

1	Mahmoud **ABUNADA**	(26) 05.02.00	Al Rayyan
21	Salah **ZAKARIA**	(27) 24.04.99	Al Duhail
22	Meshaal **BARSHAM**	(28) 14.02.98	Al Sadd

DEFENDERS

2	Pedro **MIGUEL**	(35) 06.08.90	Al Sadd
3	Lucas **MENDES**	(35) 03.07.90	Al Wakrah
4	Gueye Issa **LAYE**	(28) 22.12.97	Al Arabi
13	Ayoub **AL OUI**	(21) 11.03.05	Al Gharafa
14	Homam **AHMED**	(26) 25.08.99	Cultural Leonesa (Spa)
16	Boualem **KHOUKHI**	(35) 09.07.90	Al Sadd
18	Sultan **AL BRAKE**	(30) 07.04.96	Al Duhail
25	Al Hashmi **AL HUSSEIN**	(22) 15.08.03	Al Arabi

MIDFIELDERS

5	Jassem **GABER**	(24) 20.02.02	Al Rayyan
6	Abdulaziz **HATEM**	(36) 01.01.90	Al Rayyan
12	Karim **BOUDIAF**	(35) 16.09.90	Al Duhail
20	Ahmed **FATHY**	(33) 25.01.93	Al Arabi
23	Assim **MADIBO**	(29) 22.10.96	Al Wakrah
26	Mohamed **MANAI**	(23) 25.10.02	Al Shamal

FORWARDS

7	Ahmed **ALAAELDIN**	(33) 31.01.93	Al Rayyan
8	**EDMILSON JUNIOR**	(31) 19.08.94	Al Duhail
9	Mohammed **MUNTARI**	(32) 20.12.93	Al Gharafa
10	Hassan **AL HAYDOS**	(35) 11.12.90	Al Sadd
11	Akram **AFIF**	(29) 18.11.96	Al Sadd
15	Yusuf **ABDURISAG**	(26) 06.08.99	Al Wakrah
17	Ahmed **AL GANEHI**	(25) 22.09.00	Al Gharafa
19	Almoez **ALI**	(29) 19.08.96	Al Duhail
24	Tahsin **MOHAMMED**	(19) 16.06.06	Al Duhail

COACH

Julen **LOPETEGUI** (Spa)	(59) 28.08.66	

SAUDI ARABIA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Nawaf **AL AQIDI**	(26) 10.05.00	Al Nassr
21	Mohammed **AL OWAIS**	(34) 10.10.91	Al Ula
22	Ahmed **AL KASSAR**	(35) 08.05.91	Al Qadsiah

DEFENDERS

2	Ali **MAJRASHI**	(26) 02.10.99	Al Ahli
3	Ali **LAJAMI**	(30) 24.04.96	Al Hilal
4	Abdulelah **AL AMRI**	(29) 15.01.97	Al Nassr
5	Hassan **AL TAMBAKTI**	(27) 09.02.99	Al Hilal
12	Saud **ABDULHAMID**	(26) 18.07.99	Lens (Fra)
13	Nawaf **BUWASHAL**	(26) 16.09.99	Al Nassr
14	Hassan **KADISH**	(33) 26.09.92	Al Ittihad
24	Moteb **AL HARBI**	(26) 20.02.00	Al Hilal
25	Jehad **THIKRI**	(24) 21.07.01	Al Qadsiah
26	Mohammed **ABU AL SHAMAT**	(23) 11.08.02	Al Qadsiah

MIDFIELDERS

6	Nasser **AL DAWSARI**	(27) 19.12.98	Al Hilal
7	Musab **AL JUWAYR**	(22) 20.06.03	Al Qadsiah
8	Aiman **YAHYA**	(25) 14.05.01	Al Nassr
15	Abdullah **AL KHAIBARI**	(29) 16.08.96	Al Nassr
16	Ziyad **AL JOHANI**	(24) 11.11.01	Al Ahli
18	Alaa **AL HEJJI**	(30) 03.12.95	Neom
23	Mohamed **KANNO**	(31) 22.09.94	Al Hilal

FORWARDS

9	Feras **AL BRIKAN**	(26) 14.05.00	Al Ahli
10	Salem **AL DAWSARI**	(34) 19.08.91	Al Hilal
11	Saleh **AL SHEHRI**	(32) 01.11.93	Al Ittihad
17	Khalid **AL GHANNAM**	(25) 08.11.00	Al Ettifaq
19	Abdullah **AL HAMDDAN**	(26) 13.09.99	Al Nassr
20	Sultan **MANDASH**	(31) 17.10.94	Al Hilal

COACH

Georgios **DONIS** (Gre)	(56) 22.10.69	

SCOTLAND

GOALKEEPERS

1	Angus **GUNN**	(30) 22.01.96	Nottingham Forest (Eng)
12	Liam **KELLY**	(30) 23.01.96	Rangers
21	Craig **GORDON**	(43) 31.12.82	Hearts

DEFENDERS

2	Aaron **HICKEY**	(24) 10.06.02	Brentford (Eng)
3	Andy **ROBERTSON**	(32) 11.03.94	Liverpool (Eng)
5	Grant **HANLEY**	(34) 20.11.91	Hibernian
6	Kieran **TIERNEY**	(29) 05.06.97	Celtic
13	Jack **HENDRY**	(31) 07.05.95	Al Ettifaq (KSA)
15	John **SOUTTAR**	(29) 25.09.96	Rangers
16	Dominic **HYAM**	(30) 20.12.95	Wrexham (Wal)
22	Nathan **PATTERSON**	(24) 16.10.01	Everton (Eng)
24	Anthony **RALSTON**	(27) 16.11.98	Celtic
26	Scott **McKENNA**	(29) 12.11.96	Dinamo Zagreb (Cro)

MIDFIELDERS

4	Scott **McTOMINAY**	(29) 08.12.96	Napoli (Ita)
7	John **McGINN**	(31) 18.10.94	Aston Villa (Eng)
8	Tyler **FLETCHER**	(19) 19.03.07	Manchester United (Eng)
11	Ryan **CHRISTIE**	(31) 22.02.95	Bournemouth (Eng)
19	Lewis **FERGUSON**	(26) 24.08.99	Bologna (Ita)
23	Kenny **McLEAN**	(34) 08.01.92	Norwich City (Eng)

FORWARDS

9	Lyndon **DYKES**	(30) 07.10.95	Charlton Athletic (Eng)
10	Che **ADAMS**	(29) 13.07.96	Torino (Ita)
14	Ross **STEWART**	(29) 11.07.96	Southampton (Eng)
17	Ben **GANNON-DOAK**	(20) 11.11.05	Bournemouth (Eng)
18	George **HIRST**	(27) 15.02.99	Ipswich Town (Eng)
20	Lawrence **SHANKLAND**	(30) 10.08.95	Hearts
25	Findlay **CURTIS**	(20) 09.06.06	Kilmarnock

COACH

Steve **CLARKE**	(62) 29.08.63	

SENEGAL

GOALKEEPERS

1	Yehvann **DIOUF**	(26) 16.11.99	Nice (Fra)
16	Edouard **MENDY**	(34) 01.03.92	Al Ahli (KSA)
23	Mory **DIAW**	(32) 22.06.93	Le Havre (Fra)

DEFENDERS

2	Mamadou **SARR**	(20) 29.08.05	Chelsea (Eng)
3	Kalidou **KOULIBALY**	(34) 20.06.91	Al Hilal (KSA)
4	Abdoulaye **SECK**	(34) 04.06.92	Maccabi Haifa (Isr)
14	Ismail **JAKOBS**	(26) 17.08.99	Galatasaray (Tur)
15	Krepin **DIATTA**	(27) 25.02.99	Monaco (Fra)
19	Moussa **NIAKHATE**	(30) 08.03.96	Lyon (Fra)
24	Antoine **MENDY**	(22) 27.05.04	Nice (Fra)
25	El Hadji Malick **DIOUF**	(21) 29.12.04	West Ham United (Eng)

MIDFIELDERS

5	Idrissa **GANA GUEYE**	(36) 26.09.89	Everton (Eng)
6	Pathe **CISS**	(32) 16.03.94	Rayo Vallecano (Spa)
8	Lamine **CAMARA**	(22) 01.01.04	Monaco (Fra)
17	Pape Matar **SARR**	(23) 14.09.02	Tottenham Hotspur (Eng)
21	Habib **DIARRA**	(22) 03.01.04	Sunderland (Eng)
22	Bara Sapoko **NDIAYE**	(18) 31.12.07	Bayern Munich (Ger)
26	Pape **GUEYE**	(27) 24.01.99	Villarreal (Spa)

FORWARDS

7	Assane **DIAO**	(20) 07.09.05	Como (Ita)
9	Bamba **DIENG**	(26) 23.03.00	Lorient (Fra)
10	Sadio **MANE**	(34) 10.04.92	Al Nassr (KSA)
11	Nicolas **JACKSON**	(24) 20.06.01	Bayern Munich (Ger)
12	Cherif **NDIAYE**	(30) 23.01.96	Samsunspor (Tur)
13	Iliman **NDIAYE**	(26) 06.03.00	Everton (Eng)
18	Ismaila **SARR**	(28) 25.02.98	Crystal Palace (Eng)
20	Ibrahim **MBAYE**	(18) 24.01.08	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)

COACH

Pape **THIAW**	(45) 05.02.81	

SOUTH AFRICA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Ronwen **WILLIAMS**	(34) 21.01.92	Mamelodi Sundowns
16	Sipho **CHAINE**	(29) 14.12.96	Orlando Pirates
22	Ricardo **GOSS**	(32) 02.04.94	Siwelele

DEFENDERS

2	Thabang **MATULUDI**	(27) 14.01.99	Polokwane City
3	Khulumani **NDAMANE**	(22) 05.02.04	Mamelodi Sundowns
6	Aubrey **MODIBA**	(30) 22.07.95	Mamelodi Sundowns
14	Mbekezeli **MBOKAZI**	(20) 19.09.05	Chicago Fire (USA)
18	Samukele **KABINI**	(22) 15.03.04	Molde (Nor)
19	Nkosinathi **SIBISI**	(30) 22.09.95	Orlando Pirates
20	Khuliso **MUDAU**	(31) 26.04.95	Mamelodi Sundowns
21	Ime **OKON**	(22) 20.02.04	Hannover (Ger)
24	Olwethu **MAKHANYA**	(22) 30.04.04	Philadelphia Union (USA)
26	Bradley **CROSS**	(25) 30.01.01	Kaizer Chiefs

MIDFIELDERS

4	Teboho **MOKOENA**	(29) 24.01.97	Mamelodi Sundowns
5	Thalente **MBATHA**	(26) 06.03.00	Orlando Pirates
10	Relebohile **MOFOKENG**	(21) 23.10.04	Orlando Pirates
11	Themba **ZWANE**	(36) 03.08.89	Mamelodi Sundowns
13	Sphephelo **SITHOLE**	(27) 03.03.99	Tondela (Por)
23	Jayden **ADAMS**	(25) 05.05.01	Mamelodi Sundowns

FORWARDS

7	Oswin **APPOLLIS**	(24) 25.08.01	Orlando Pirates
8	Tshepang **MOREMI**	(25) 02.10.00	Orlando Pirates
9	Lyle **FOSTER**	(25) 03.09.00	Burnley (Eng)
12	Thapelo **MASEKO**	(22) 11.11.03	AEL Limassol (Cyp)
15	Iqraam **RAYNERS**	(30) 19.12.95	Mamelodi Sundowns
17	Evidence **MAKGOPA**	(26) 05.06.00	Orlando Pirates
25	Kamogelo **SEBELEBELE**	(23) 21.07.02	Orlando Pirates

COACH

Hugo **BROOS** (Bel)	(74) 10.04.52	

SOUTH KOREA

GOALKEEPERS

1	**KIM** Seung-gyu	(35) 30.09.90	FC Tokyo (Jpn)
12	**SONG** Bum-keun	(28) 15.10.97	Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors
21	**JO** Hyeon-woo	(34) 25.09.91	Ulsan HD

DEFENDERS

2	**LEE** Han-beom	(23) 17.06.02	Midtjylland (Den)
3	**LEE** Gi-hyuk	(25) 07.07.00	Gangwon FC
4	**KIM** Min-jae	(29) 15.11.96	Bayern Munich (Ger)
5	**KIM** Tae-hyeon	(25) 17.09.00	Kashima Antlers (Jpn)
13	**LEE** Tae-seok	(23) 28.07.02	Austria Vienna (Aut)
14	**CHO** Wi-je	(24) 25.08.01	Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors
15	**KIM** Moon-hwan	(30) 01.08.95	Daejeon Hana Citizen
22	**SEOL** Young-woo	(27) 05.12.98	Red Star Belgrade (Srb)
23	Jens **CASTROP**	(22) 29.07.03	Borussia M'gladbach (Ger)

MIDFIELDERS

6	**HWANG** In-beom	(29) 20.09.96	Feyenoord (Ned)
8	**PAIK** Seung-ho	(29) 17.03.97	Birmingham City (Eng)
10	**LEE** Jae-sung	(33) 10.08.92	Mainz (Ger)
16	**PARK** Jin-seob	(30) 23.10.95	Zhejiang FC (Chn)
17	**BAE** Jun-ho	(22) 21.08.03	Stoke City (Eng)
19	**LEE** Kang-in	(25) 19.02.01	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)
20	**YANG** Hyun-jun	(24) 25.05.02	Celtic (Sco)
24	**KIM** Jin-gyu	(29) 24.02.97	Jeonbuk Hyundai Motors
25	**EOM** Ji-sung	(24) 09.05.02	Swansea City (Wal)
26	**LEE** Dong-gyeong	(28) 20.09.97	Ulsan HD

FORWARDS

7	**SON** Heung-min	(33) 08.07.92	LAFC (USA)
9	**CHO** Gue-sung	(28) 25.01.98	Midtjylland (Den)
11	**HWANG** Hee-chan	(30) 26.01.96	Wolverhampton Wanderers (Eng)
18	**OH** Hyeon-gyu	(25) 12.04.01	Besiktas (Tur)

COACH

HONG Myung-bo	(57) 12.02.69	

SPAIN

GOALKEEPERS

1	David **RAYA**	(30) 15.09.95	Arsenal (Eng)
13	Joan **GARCIA**	(25) 04.05.01	Barcelona
23	Unai **SIMON**	(29) 11.06.97	Athletic Club

DEFENDERS

2	Marc **PUBILL**	(22) 20.06.03	Atletico Madrid
3	Alex **GRIMALDO**	(30) 20.09.95	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)
4	Eric **GARCIA**	(25) 09.01.01	Barcelona
5	Marcos **LLORENTE**	(31) 30.01.95	Atletico Madrid
12	Pedro **PORRO**	(26) 13.09.99	Tottenham Hotspur (Eng)
14	Aymeric **LAPORTE**	(32) 27.05.94	Athletic Club
22	Pau **CUBARSI**	(19) 22.01.07	Barcelona
24	Marc **CUCURELLA**	(27) 22.07.98	Chelsea (Eng)

MIDFIELDERS

6	Mikel **MERINO**	(29) 22.06.96	Arsenal (Eng)
8	**FABIAN** Ruiz	(30) 03.04.96	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)
9	**GAVI**	(21) 05.08.04	Barcelona
10	Dani **OLMO**	(28) 07.05.98	Barcelona
15	Alex **BAENA**	(24) 20.07.01	Atletico Madrid
16	**RODRI**	(29) 22.06.96	Manchester City (Eng)
18	Martin **ZUBIMENDI**	(27) 02.02.99	Arsenal (Eng)
20	**PEDRI**	(23) 25.11.02	Barcelona

FORWARDS

7	**FERRAN** Torres	(26) 29.02.00	Barcelona
11	**YEREMY** Pino	(23) 20.10.02	Crystal Palace (Eng)
17	Nico **WILLIAMS**	(23) 12.07.02	Athletic Club
19	Lamine **YAMAL**	(18) 13.07.07	Barcelona
21	Mikel **OYARZABAL**	(29) 21.04.97	Real Sociedad
25	Victor **MUNOZ**	(22) 13.07.03	Osasuna
26	Borja **IGLESIAS**	(33) 17.01.93	Celta Vigo

COACH

Luis **DE LA FUENTE**	(64) 21.06.61	

SWEDEN

GOALKEEPERS

1	Jacob **WIDELL ZETTERSTROM**	(27) 11.07.98	Derby County (Eng)
12	Viktor **JOHANSSON**	(27) 14.09.98	Stoke City (Eng)
23	Kristoffer **NORDFELDT**	(36) 23.06.89	AIK

DEFENDERS

2	Gustaf **LAGERBIELKE**	(26) 10.04.00	Braga (Por)
3	Victor **LINDELOF**	(31) 17.07.94	Aston Villa (Eng)
4	Isak **HIEN**	(27) 13.01.99	Atalanta (Ita)
5	Gabriel **GUDMUNDSSON**	(27) 29.04.99	Leeds United (Eng)
6	Herman **JOHANSSON**	(28) 16.10.97	FC Dallas (USA)
8	Daniel **SVENSSON**	(24) 12.02.02	Borussia Dortmund (Ger)
14	Hjalmar **EKDAL**	(27) 21.10.98	Burnley (Eng)
15	Carl **STARFELT**	(31) 01.06.95	Celta Vigo (Spa)
20	Eric **SMITH**	(29) 08.01.97	St Pauli (Ger)
24	Elliot **STROUD**	(23) 22.06.02	Mjallby

MIDFIELDERS

7	Lucas **BERGVALL**	(20) 02.02.06	Tottenham Hotspur (Eng)
10	Benjamin **NYGREN**	(24) 08.07.01	Celtic (Sco)
13	Ken **SEMA**	(32) 30.09.93	Pafos (Cyp)
16	Jesper **KARLSTROM**	(30) 21.06.95	Udinese (Ita)
18	Yasin **AYARI**	(22) 06.10.03	Brighton (Eng)
19	Mattias **SVANBERG**	(27) 05.01.99	Wolfsburg (Ger)
22	Besfort **ZENELI**	(23) 21.11.02	Union Saint-Gilloise (Bel)

FORWARDS

9	Alexander **ISAK**	(26) 21.09.99	Liverpool (Eng)
11	Anthony **ELANGA**	(24) 27.04.02	Newcastle United (Eng)
17	Viktor **GYOKERES**	(28) 04.06.98	Arsenal (Eng)
21	Alexander **BERNHARDSSON**	(27) 08.09.98	Holstein Kiel (Ger)
25	Gustaf **NILSSON**	(29) 23.05.97	Club Brugge (Bel)
26	Taha **ALI**	(27) 01.07.98	Malmo

COACH

Graham **POTTER** (Eng)	(51) 20.05.75	

SWITZERLAND

GOALKEEPERS

1	Gregor **KOBEL**	(28) 06.12.97	Borussia Dortmund (Ger)
12	Yvon **MVOGO**	(32) 06.06.94	Lorient (Fra)
21	Marvin **KELLER**	(23) 03.07.02	Young Boys

DEFENDERS

2	Miro **MUHEIM**	(28) 24.03.98	Hamburg (Ger)
3	Silvan **WIDMER**	(33) 05.03.93	Mainz (Ger)
4	Nico **ELVEDI**	(29) 30.09.96	Borussia M'gladbach (Ger)
5	Manuel **AKANJI**	(30) 19.07.95	Internazionale (Ita)
13	Ricardo **RODRIGUEZ**	(33) 25.08.92	Real Betis (Spa)
18	Eray **COMERT**	(28) 04.02.98	Valencia (Spa)
24	Aurele **AMENDA**	(22) 31.07.03	Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)
25	Luca **JAQUEZ**	(23) 02.06.03	Stuttgart (Ger)

MIDFIELDERS

6	Denis **ZAKARIA**	(29) 20.11.96	Monaco (Fra)
8	Remo **FREULER**	(34) 15.04.92	Bologna (Ita)
9	Johan **MANZAMBI**	(20) 14.10.05	Freiburg (Ger)
10	Granit **XHAKA**	(33) 27.09.92	Sunderland (Eng)
14	Ardon **JASHARI**	(23) 30.07.02	Milan (Ita)
15	Djibril **SOW**	(29) 06.02.97	Sevilla (Spa)
20	Michel **AEBISCHER**	(29) 06.01.97	Pisa (Ita)
22	Fabian **RIEDER**	(24) 16.02.02	Augsburg (Ger)

FORWARDS

7	Breel **EMBOLO**	(29) 14.02.97	Rennes (Fra)
11	Dan **NDOYE**	(25) 25.10.00	Nottingham Forest (Eng)
16	Christian **FASSNACHT**	(32) 11.11.93	Young Boys
17	Ruben **VARGAS**	(27) 05.08.98	Sevilla (Spa)
19	Noah **OKAFOR**	(26) 24.05.00	Leeds United (Eng)
23	Zeki **AMDOUNI**	(25) 04.12.00	Burnley (Eng)
26	Cedric **ITTEN**	(29) 27.12.96	Fortuna Dusseldorf (Ger)

COACH

Murat **YAKIN**	(51) 15.09.74	

TUNISIA

GOALKEEPERS

1	Mouhib **CHAMAKH**	(24) 25.08.01	Club Africain
16	Aymen **DAHMEN**	(29) 28.01.97	CS Sfaxien
22	Sabri **BEN HESSEN**	(29) 13.06.96	Etoile Sahel

DEFENDERS

2	Ali **ABDI**	(32) 20.12.93	Nice (Fra)
3	Montassar **TALBI**	(28) 26.05.98	Lorient (Fra)
4	Omar **REKIK**	(24) 20.12.01	Maribor (Svn)
5	Adam **AROUS**	(21) 17.07.04	Kasimpasa (Tur)
6	Dylan **BRONN**	(30) 19.06.95	Servette (Sui)
12	Mortadha **BEN OUANES**	(31) 02.07.94	Kasimpasa (Tur)
20	Yan **VALERY**	(27) 22.02.99	Young Boys (Sui)
21	Mohamed Amine **BEN HMIDA**	(30) 15.12.95	Esperance
23	Moutaz **NEFFATI**	(21) 04.09.04	IFK Norrkoping (Swe)
24	Raed **CHIKHAOUI**	(22) 09.06.04	US Monastir

MIDFIELDERS

10	**HANNIBAL** Mejbri	(23) 21.01.03	Burnley (Eng)
11	Ismael **GHARBI**	(22) 10.04.04	Augsburg (Ger)
13	Rani **KHEDIRA**	(32) 27.01.94	Union Berlin (Ger)
15	Mohamed **HADJ MAHMOUD**	(26) 24.04.00	Lugano (Sui)
17	Ellyes **SKHIRI**	(31) 10.05.95	Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)
25	Anis **BEN SLIMANE**	(25) 16.03.01	Norwich City (Eng)

FORWARDS

7	Elias **ACHOURI**	(27) 10.02.99	Copenhagen (Den)
8	Elias **SAAD**	(26) 27.12.99	Hannover (Ger)
9	Hazem **MASTOURI**	(28) 18.06.97	Dynamo Makhachkala (Rus)
14	Khalil **AYARI**	(21) 02.02.05	Paris Saint-Germain (Fra)
18	Rayan **ELLOUMI**	(18) 17.09.07	Vancouver Whitecaps (Can)
19	Firas **CHAOUAT**	(30) 08.05.96	Club Africain
26	Sebastian **TOUNEKTI**	(23) 13.07.02	Celtic (Sco)

COACH

Sabri **LAMOUCHI** (Fra)*	(54) 09.11.71	**first match*
Herve **RENARD** (Fra)**	(57) 30.09.68	***remaining matches*

TURKEY

GOALKEEPERS

1	Mert **GUNOK**	(37) 01.03.89	Fenerbahce
12	Altay **BAYINDIR**	(28) 14.04.98	Manchester United (Eng)
23	Ugurcan **CAKIR**	(30) 05.04.96	Galatasaray

DEFENDERS

2	Zeki **CELIK**	(29) 17.02.97	Roma (Ita)
3	Merih **DEMIRAL**	(28) 05.03.98	Al Ahli (KSA)
4	Caglar **SOYUNCU**	(30) 23.05.96	Fenerbahce
13	Eren **ELMALI**	(25) 07.07.00	Galatasaray
14	Abdulkerim **BARDAKCI**	(31) 07.09.94	Galatasaray
15	Ozan **KABAK**	(26) 25.03.00	Hoffenheim (Ger)
18	Mert **MULDUR**	(27) 03.04.99	Fenerbahce
20	Ferdi **KADIOGLU**	(26) 07.10.99	Brighton (Eng)
25	Samet **AKAYDIN**	(32) 13.03.94	Caykur Rizespor

MIDFIELDERS

5	Salih **OZCAN**	(28) 11.01.98	Borussia Dortmund (Ger)
6	Orkun **KOKCU**	(25) 29.12.00	Besiktas
8	Arda **GULER**	(21) 25.02.05	Real Madrid (Spa)
10	Hakan **CALHANOGLU**	(32) 08.02.94	Internazionale (Ita)
16	Ismail **YUKSEK**	(27) 26.01.99	Fenerbahce
22	Kaan **AYHAN**	(31) 10.11.94	Galatasaray
26	Can **UZUN**	(20) 11.11.05	Eintracht Frankfurt (Ger)

FORWARDS

7	Kerem **AKTURKOGLU**	(27) 21.10.98	Fenerbahce
9	Deniz **GUL**	(21) 02.07.04	Porto (Por)
11	Kenan **YILDIZ**	(21) 04.05.05	Juventus (Ita)
17	Irfan Can **KAHVECI**	(30) 15.07.95	Kasimpasa
19	Yunus **AKGUN**	(25) 07.07.00	Galatasaray
21	Baris Alper **YILMAZ**	(26) 23.05.00	Galatasaray
24	Oguz **AYDIN**	(25) 27.10.00	Fenerbahce

COACH

Vincenzo **MONTELLA** (Ita)	(51) 18.06.74	

UNITED STATES

GOALKEEPERS

1	Matt **TURNER**	(31) 24.06.94	New England Revolution
24	Matt **FREESE**	(27) 02.09.98	New York City FC
25	Chris **BRADY**	(22) 03.03.04	Chicago Fire

DEFENDERS

2	Sergino **DEST**	(25) 03.11.00	PSV (Ned)
3	Chris **RICHARDS**	(26) 28.03.00	Crystal Palace (Eng)
5	Antonee **ROBINSON**	(28) 08.08.97	Fulham (Eng)
6	Auston **TRUSTY**	(27) 12.08.98	Celtic (Sco)
12	Miles **ROBINSON**	(29) 14.03.97	FC Cincinnatti
13	Tim **REAM**	(38) 05.10.87	Charlotte FC
16	Alex **FREEMAN**	(21) 09.08.04	Villarreal (Spa)
18	Max **ARFSTEN**	(25) 19.04.01	Columbus Crew
22	Mark **McKENZIE**	(27) 25.02.99	Toulouse (Fra)
23	Joe **SCALLY**	(23) 31.12.02	Borussia M'gladbach (Ger)

MIDFIELDERS

4	Tyler **ADAMS**	(27) 14.02.99	Bournemouth (Eng)
7	Giovanni **REYNA**	(23) 13.11.02	Borussia M'gladbach (Ger)
8	Weston **McKENNIE**	(27) 28.08.98	Juventus (Ita)
14	Sebastian **BERHALTER**	(25) 10.05.01	Vancouver Whitecaps (Can)
15	Cristian **ROLDAN**	(31) 03.06.95	Seattle Sounders
17	Malik **TILLMAN**	(24) 28.05.02	Bayer Leverkusen (Ger)

FORWARDS

9	Ricardo **PEPI**	(23) 09.01.03	PSV (Ned)
10	Christian **PULISIC**	(27) 18.09.98	Milan (Ita)
11	Brenden **AARONSON**	(25) 22.10.00	Leeds United (Eng)
19	Haji **WRIGHT**	(28) 27.03.98	Coventry City (Eng)
20	Folarin **BALOGUN**	(24) 03.07.01	Monaco (Fra)
21	Timothy **WEAH**	(26) 22.02.00	Marseille (Fra)
26	Alex **ZENDEJAS**	(28) 07.02.98	America (Mex)

COACH

Mauricio **POCHETTINO** (Arg)	(54) 02.03.72	

URUGUAY

GOALKEEPERS

1	Sergio **ROCHET**	(33) 23.03.93	Internacional (Bra)
12	Santiago **MELE**	(28) 06.09.97	Monterrey (Mex)
23	Fernando **MUSLERA**	(39) 16.06.86	Estudiantes LP (Arg)

DEFENDERS

2	Jose Maria **GIMENEZ**	(31) 20.01.95	Atletico Madrid (Spa)
3	Sebastian **CACERES**	(26) 18.08.99	America (Mex)
4	Ronald **ARAUJO**	(27) 07.03.99	Barcelona (Spa)
13	Guillermo **VARELA**	(33) 24.03.93	Flamengo (Bra)
16	Matthias **OLIVERA**	(28) 31.10.97	Napoli (Ita)
17	Matias **VINA**	(28) 09.11.97	River Plate (Arg)
22	Joaquin **PIQUEREZ**	(27) 24.08.98	Palmeiras (Bra)
24	Santiago **BUENO**	(27) 09.11.98	Wolverhampton Wanderers (Eng)

MIDFIELDERS

5	Manuel **UGARTE**	(25) 11.04.01	Manchester United (Eng)
6	Rodrigo **BENTANCUR**	(28) 25.06.97	Tottenham Hotspur (Eng)
7	Nicolas **DE LA CRUZ**	(29) 01.06.97	Flamengo (Bra)
8	Federico **VALVERDE**	(27) 22.07.98	Real Madrid (Spa)
10	Giorgian **DE ARRASCAETA**	(32) 01.06.94	Flamengo (Bra)
14	Agustin **CANOBBIO**	(27) 01.10.98	Fluminense (Bra)
15	Emiliano **MARTINEZ**	(26) 17.08.99	Palmeiras (Bra)
25	Juan Manuel **SANABRIA**	(26) 29.03.00	Real Salt Lake (USA)
26	Rodrigo **ZALAZAR**	(26) 12.08.99	Braga (Por)

FORWARDS

9	Darwin **NUNEZ**	(26) 24.06.99	Al Hilal (KSA)
11	Facundo **PELLISTRI**	(24) 20.12.01	Panathinaikos (Gre)
18	Brian **RODRIGUEZ**	(26) 20.05.00	America (Mex)
19	Rodrigo **AGUIRRE**	(31) 01.10.94	Tigres UANL (Mex)
20	Maxi **ARAUJO**	(26) 15.02.00	Sporting (Por)
21	Federico **VINAS**	(27) 30.06.98	Real Oviedo (Spa)

COACH

Marcelo **BIELSA** (Arg)	(70) 21.07.55	

UZBEKISTAN

GOALKEEPERS

1	Utkir **YUSUPOV**	(35) 04.01.91	Navbahor
12	Abduvohid **NEMATOV**	(25) 20.03.01	Nasaf
16	Botirali **ERGASHEV**	(30) 23.06.95	Neftchi

DEFENDERS

2	Abdukodir **KHUSANOV**	(22) 29.02.04	Manchester City (Eng)
3	Khojiakbar **ALIJONOV**	(29) 19.04.97	Pakhtakor
4	Farrukh **SAYFIEV**	(35) 17.01.91	Neftchi
5	Rustam **ASHURMATOV**	(29) 07.07.96	Esteghlal (Irn)
13	Sherzod **NASRULLAEV**	(27) 23.07.98	Pakhtakor
15	Umar **ESHMURODOV**	(33) 30.11.92	Nasaf
18	Abdulla **ABDULLAEV**	(28) 01.09.97	Dibba (UAE)
24	Bekhruz **KARIMOV**	(18) 07.08.07	Surkhon
25	Avazbek **ULMASALIYEV**	(26) 27.03.00	AGMK
26	Jakhongir **UROZOV**	(22) 18.01.04	Dinamo Samarqand

MIDFIELDERS

6	Akmal **MOZGOVOY**	(27) 02.04.99	Pakhtakor
7	Otabek **SHUKUROV**	(29) 22.06.96	Baniyas (UAE)
8	Jamshid **ISKANDEROV**	(32) 16.10.93	Neftchi
9	Odiljon **HAMROBEKOV**	(30) 13.02.96	Tractor (Irn)
10	Ruslan **JIYANOV**	(25) 05.06.01	Navbahor
11	Oston **URUNOV**	(25) 19.12.00	Persepolis (Irn)
17	Dostonbek **KHAMDAMOV**	(29) 24.07.96	Pakhtakor
19	Azizjon **GANIEV**	(28) 22.02.98	Al Bataeh (UAE)
23	Sherzod **ESANOV**	(23) 01.02.03	Bukhara

FORWARDS

14	Eldor **SHOMURODOV**	(30) 29.06.95	Istanbul Basaksehir (Tur)
20	Azizbek **AMONOV**	(28) 30.10.97	Dinamo Samarqand
21	Igor **SERGEEV**	(33) 30.04.93	Persepolis (Irn)
22	Abbosbek **FAYZULLAEV**	(22) 03.10.03	Istanbul Basaksehir (Tur)

COACH

Fabio **CANNAVARO** (Ita)	(52) 13.09.73	

(Ages correct as of 11.06.26, clubs correct as of 2025–26 season)

Internationals

FRIENDLIES

Jun 1 – Plovdiv
Bulgaria 0
Montenegro 1 (Sekulic 68)

Jun 1 – Dunajska Streda
Slovakia 2 (Haraslin 9, Galcik 90+7)
Malta 1 (J. Mbong 37)

Jun 1 – Oslo
Norway 3 (Strand Larsen 8, 37, Nusa 18)
Sweden 1 (Isak 76)

Jun 1 – Istanbul
Turkey 4 (Kokcu 2, Uzun 16, Gul 53, Yilmaz 70)
North Macedonia 0

Jun 1 – Vienna
Austria 1 (Sabitzer 63)
Tunisia 0

Jun 2 – Bogota
Colombia 3 (Sanchez 17, Diaz 23, Suarez 81)
Costa Rica 1 (Soto 33)

Jun 2 – Edmonton
Canada 2 (Osorio 58, Nelson 90+1)
Uzbekistan 0

Jun 2 – Rijeka
Croatia 0
Belgium 2 (Tielemans 38, Lukaku 90+6)

Jun 2 – Tbilisi
Georgia 1 (Kvilitaia 46)
Romania 1 (Munteanu 55)

Jun 2 – Rabat
Morocco 4 (Saibari 4, 25, Rahimi 78 pen, El Kaabi 87)
Madagascar 0

Jun 2 – Cardiff
Wales 1 (Koumas 90+3)
Ghana 1 (Yirenkyi 66)

Jun 3 – Tirana
Albania 0
Israel 1 (Gloukh 73)

Jun 3 – Liege
DR Congo 0
Denmark 0

Jun 3 – Luxembourg City
Luxembourg 0
Italy 1 (Esposito 49)

Jun 3 – Rotterdam
Netherlands 0
Algeria 1 (Hadj Moussa 86)

Jun 3 – Warsaw
Poland 2 (Potulski 45+1, Wisniewski 90+5)
Nigeria 2 (Moffi 23, Onuachu 77 pen)

Jun 3 – Fort Lauderdale
Haiti 4 (Providence 12, Joseph 51, Pierrot 62, Lacroix 87)
New Zealand 0

Jun 3 – Europa Point
Gibaltar 4 (Lacey 10 og, Scanlon 32, 64, Mason 42)
British Virgin Islands 0

Jun 4 – Panama City
Panama 4 (T. Rodriguez 16, Dollenmayer 44 og, Waterman 57, Barria 89)
Dominican Republic 2 (M. Diaz 47, Japa 67)

Jun 4 – Provo
South Korea 1 (Lee Dong-gyeong 57)
El Salvador 0

Jun 4 – Pretoria
Lesotho 1 (Makhele 70)
Kenya 1 (Odhiambo 12)

Jun 4 – Cadiz
Northern Ireland 1 (Atcheson 9)
Guinea 0

Jun 4 – Ljubljana
Slovenia 1 (Drkusic 65)
Cyprus 1 (Tzionis 7)

Jun 4 – Stockholm
Sweden 2 (Gyokeres 53, Nilsson 69)
Greece 2 (Tsimikas 10, Masouras 90+5)

Jun 4 – A Coruna
Spain 1 (Ferran 16)
Iraq 1 (Doski 27)

Jun 4 – Nantes
France 1 (Cherki 45)
Ivory Coast 2 (Doue 53, Amad 84)

Jun 5 – Harrison
Czech Republic 3 (Schick 11, Chory 72, Visinsky 79)
Guatemala 1 (Fajardo 40)

Jun 5 – Toluca
Mexico 5 (Vasquez 34, Bukinac 45+2 og, Jimenez 57, Avdic 72 og, L. Chavez 90)
Serbia 1 (Stanic 19)

Jun 5 – Kallang
Singapore 1 (Ilhan 76)
China 2 (Serginho 16, Zhang Yuning 41 pen)

Jun 5 – Pathum Thani
Thailand 2 (Seksan 42, Kritsada 45+4)
Kuwait 2 (Majed 48, Al Rashedi 69)

Jun 5 –Jakarta
Indonesia 3 (Hubner 13, Romeny 27, Oratmangoen 56)
Oman 0

Jun 5 – Kosice
Slovakia 2 (Bozenik 4, Duda 74)
Montengero 2 (Osmajic 44, 66 pen)

Jun 5 – Volgograd
Russia 3 (Sadulaev 14, Al. Miranchuk 20, Vakhania 73)
Burkina Faso 0

Jun 5 – Chisinau
Moldova 2 (Bogaciuc 60, Baboglo 85)
Bulgaria 2 (Rusev 23, M. Petkov 76)

Jun 5 – Budapest
Hungary 2 (Varga 25, 43)
Finland 1 (Miettinen 71)

Jun 5 – Asuncion
Paraguay 4 (Romero Gamarra 17 pen, Almiron 42, Galarza 62, Maidana 67)
Nicaragua 0

Jun 5 – Tursunzoda
Tajikistan 3 (Boboev 9 pen, Karimov 62, Panjshanbe 68)
India 1 (Choudhary 89)

Jun 5 – Minsk
Belarus 4 (Morozov 3, Kontsevoy 11, Shumanskiy 48, Yablonskiy 78)
Syria 1 (Al Mawas 87 pen)

Jun 5 – Tbilisi
Georgia 2 (Lochoshvili 52, Kvaratskhelia 77 pen)
Bahrain 0

Jun 5 – Serravalle
San Marino 1 (Giacopetti 31)
Bangladesh 2 (Barman 19, 86)

Jun 5 – Szombathely
Azerbaijan 0
Malta 2 (J. Mbong 65, Satariano 86)

Jun 6 – Austin
Puerto Rico 0
Saudi Arabia 3 (Mandash 45+1, Al Hamddan 50, S. Al Dawsari 88)

Jun 6 – Montreal
Canada 1 (O'Brien 23 og)
Republic of Ireland 1 (Ogbene 60)

Jun 6 – Miami
Haiti 1 (Isidor 16)
Peru 2 (Garces 81, Velez 83)

Jun 6 – Brussels
Belgium 5 (Trossard 28, De Ketelaere 53, De Bruyne 65, Lukebakio 85, Raskin 87)
Tunisia 0

Jun 6 – Oeiras
Portugal 2 (Guedes 58, Fernandes 75)
Chile 1 (Cepeda 90+2)

Jun 6 – Bucharest
Romania 2 (Coman 52, Rus 80)
Wales 1 (Brooks 63)

Jun 6 – Chicago
United States 1 (A. Robinson 37)
Germany 2 (Havertz 2, Sane 57)

Jun 6 – St Louis
Panama 1 (Ramos 45+ 4)
Bosnia & Herzegovina 1 (Katic 23)

Jun 6 – San Diego
Switzerland 1 (Ndoye 14)
Australia 1 (Yengi 56)

Jun 6 – Harrison
Bolivia 0
Scotland 4 (Shankland 5, McTominay 23, Adams 30, 45)

Jun 6 – Tampa
England 1 (Kane 45+2)
New Zealand 0

Jun 6 – Los Angeles
Qatar 0
El Salvador 0

Jun 6 – Pachuca
Jamaica 0
South Africa 1 (Appollis 32)

Jun 6 – Cleveland
Brazil 2 (Bruno Guimaraes 7, Endrick 52)
Egypt 1 (Zico 11)

Jun 6 – Fort Lauderdale
Venezuela 1 (Mendoza 13)
Turkey 2 (Yilmaz 44, Akgun 54)

Jun 6 – Yerevan
Armenia 1 (Spertsyan 53)
Kazakhstan 1 (Samorodov 50)

Jun 6 – Europa Point
Gibraltar 4 (Scanlon 12, Borge 49, Valarino 56, De Barr 59)
Cayman Islands 1 (Reeves 1)

Jun 6 – Tirana
Albania 0
Luxembourg 1 (Sinani 8)

Jun 6 – East Hartford
Cape Verde 3 (W. Semedo 33, Rodrigues 49, Da Costa 90+1)
Bermuda 0

Jun 7 – Texas
Argentina 2 (La. Martinez 37 pen, Simeone 54)
Honduras 0

Jun 7 – Pretoria
Kenya 4 (Bajaber 8, 52, Ouma 84, 88)
Lesotho 0

Jun 7 – Odense
Denmark 2 (Dorgu 13, Maehle 36)
Ukraine 1 (Tsyhankov 44)
Match abandoned

Jun 7 – Varazdin
Croatia 2 (Modric 51, Mario Pasalic 90+3)
Slovenia 1 (Sporar 83)

Jun 7 – Heraklion
Greece 0
Italy 1 (Esposito 18)

Jun 7 – Harrison
Morocco 1 (Brahim 8)
Norway 1 (Odegaard 75)

Jun 7 – Columbus
Ecuador 3 (J. Caicedo 19 pen, Angulo 73, Estupinan 78)
Guatemala 0

Jun 7 – Willemstad
Curacao 4 (Brenet 53, Antonisse 68, Comenencia 83, J. Bacuna 90+1)
Aruba 0

Jun 7 – Vaduz
Liechtenstein 0
Cyprus 2 (Tzionis 28, Sotiriou 70)

Jun 7 – Pristina
Kosovo 3 (Alvarez 41 og, Al. Rrahmani 52 pen, Matoshi 77)
Andorra 0

Jun 8 – San Diego
Colombia 2 (J. Arias 41, 55)
Jordan 0

Jun 8 – New York
Netherlands 2 (Gakpo 32 pen, 90+8 pen)
Uzbekistan 1 (Sergeev 90+2)

Jun 8 – Lille
France 3 (Olise 43, 49, 74)
Northern Ireland 1 (Kelly 64)

Jun 9 – Puebla
Peru 1 (Velez 66)
Spain 3 (Oyarzabal 2, Pedri 32, Gallese 53 og)

Jun 9 – Zhejiang
China 0
Thailand 0

Jun 9 –Jakarta
Indonesia 1 (Romeny 12)
Mozambique 0

Jun 9 – Orleans
DR Congo 1 (J. Kayembe 88)
Chile 2 (Osorio 51, Sepulveda 86)

Jun 9 – Kaliningrad
Russia 3 (Beveev 7, Silyanov 15, Batrakov 60)
Trinidad & Tobago 0

Jun 9 – Debrecen
Hungary 3 (Szoboszlai 52, Schafer 67, Toth 90+2)
Kazakhstan 1 (Maliy 9)

Jun 9 – Yerevan
Armenia 1 (Serobyan 89)
Moldova 1 (Bogaciuc 90+1)

Jun 9 – Hisor
Tajikistan 1 (Boboev 85 pen)
India 1 (Partap Singh 25)

Jun 9 – Minsk
Belarus 2 (Malkevich 56, Vardanyan 67)
Burkina Faso 2 (E. Kabore 72, A. Tapsoba 85)

Jun 9 – Szombathely
Azerbaijan 2 (Dashdamirov 27, Dadasov 49)
San Marino 1 (Nanni 9)

Jun 10 – San Antonio
Saudi Arabia 0
Senegal 0

Jun 10 – Auburn
Argentina 3 (Barco 8, Messi 72 pen, Almada 86)
Iceland 0

Jun 10 – Bridgeview
Iraq 0
Venezuela 2 (Casseres 17, Ramirez 46)

Jun 10 – Leiria
Portugal 2 (Neto 23, Conceicao 75)
Nigeria 1 (Adams 37)

Jun 10 – Orlando
England 3 (Rice 9, Gordon 68 pen, Watkins 87)
Costa Rica 0

Jun 11 – Kansas
Bolivia 0
Algeria 4 (Mandi 45, Gouiri 56, 58, Hadj Moussa 61)

Club Football

EUROPE

2026-27 CHAMPIONS LEAGUE

First Qualifying Round – 1st Leg

Jul 7:
Sabah (Aze) 2-0 The New Saints (Wal); Floriana (Mal) 2-0 Shamrock Rovers (Irl); Lincoln Red Imps (Gib) 3-1 Inter Club d'Escaldes (And); Tre Fiori (Smr) 0-1 Larne (Nir); Ararat-Armenia (Arm) 2-0 Riga (Lva); Vardar (Mkd) 0-2 KuPS (Fin); Kauno Zalgiris (Ltu) 1-1 Drita (Kos); Vikingur Reykjavik (Isl) 1-0 Gyor ETO (Hun); KI (Fro) 2-1 Atert Bissen (Lux); Borac Banja Luka (Bih) 1-1 Levski Sofia (Bul)

Jul 8:
Flora (Est) 2-3 Iberia 1999 (Geo); ML Vitebsk (Blr) 1-4 Universitatea Craiova (Rou); Petrocub Hincesti (Mda) 1-1 Egnatia (Alb); Kairat (Kaz) 2-1 Sutjeska (Mne)

First Qualifying Round – 2nd Leg

Jul 14:
The New Saints (Wal) 1-2 Sabah (Aze) (agg 1-4); Shamrock Rovers (Irl) 5-1 Floriana (Mal) (agg 5-3); Inter Club d'Escaldes (And) 1-1 Lincoln Red Imps (Gib) (agg 2-4); Larne (Nir) 2-1 Tre Fiori (Smr) (agg 3-1); Riga (Lva) 3-2 Ararat-Armenia (Arm) (agg 3-4); KuPS (Fin) 2-3 Vardar (Mkd) (agg 4-3, *AET*); Drita (Kos) 2-3 Kauno Zalgiris (Ltu) (agg 3-4); Gyor ETO (Hun) 2-2 Vikingur Reykjavik (Isl) (agg 2-3); Iberia 1999 (Geo) 2-2 Flora (Est) (agg 5-4); Levski Sofia (Bul) 4-0 Borac Banja Luka (Bih) (agg 5-1)

Jul 15:
Atert Bissen (Lux) 1-2 KI (Fro) (agg 2-4); Universitatea Craiova (Rou) 1-0 ML Vitebsk (Blr) (agg 5-1); Egnatia (Alb) 6-1 Petrocub Hincesti (Mda) (agg 7-2); Sutjeska (Mne) 0-2 Kairat (Kaz) (agg 1-4)

2026-27 EUROPA LEAGUE

First Qualifying Round – 1st Leg

Jul 9:
Dynamo Kyiv (Ukr) 0-0 Universitatea Cluj (Rou); Qarabag (Aze) 3-0 Vestri (Isl); Hajduk Split (Cro) 2-0 Zilina (Svk); CSKA Sofia (Bul) 3-2 Derry City (Irl); Sheriff Tiraspol (Mda) 0-0 Aluminij (Svn); Vojvodina (Srb) 1-2 Ferencvaros (Hun)

First Qualifying Round – 2nd Leg

Jul 16:
Universitatea Cluj (Rou) 0-0 Dynamo Kyiv (Ukr) (agg 0-0, *AET, Dynamo Kyiv win 4-2 on pens*); Vestri (Isl) 0-3 Qarabag (Aze) (agg 0-6); Zilina (Svk) 2-1 Hajduk Split (Cro) (agg 2-3); Derry City (Irl) 1-2 CSKA Sofia (Bul) (agg 3-5); Aluminij (Svn) 0-1 Sheriff Tiraspol (Mda) (agg 0-1); Ferencvaros (Hun) 3-0 Vojvodina (Srb) (agg 5-1)

2026-27 CONFERENCE LEAGUE

First Qualifying Round – 1st Leg

Jul 7:
Elbasani (Alb) 1-1 BATE Borisov (Blr); UNA Strassen (Lux) 1-0 La Fiorita (Smr)

Jul 8:
Connah's Quay Nomads (Wal) 0-0 Ballkani (Kos); Zira (Aze) 3-0 Torpedo Kutaisi (Geo); Differdange (Lux) 0-0 Ilves (Fin)

Jul 9:
Velez Mostar (Bih) 1-1 Milsami Orhei (Mda); Bohemians (Irl) 2-0 St Joseph's (Gib); Dinamo City (Alb) 0-1 Astana (Kaz); Dinamo Minsk (Blr) 0-1 Sileks (Mkd); Liepaja (Lva) 1-0 Decic (Mne); Glentoran (Nir) 1-2 RFS (Lva); Atletic Club d'Escaldes (And) 2-1 Mornar (Mne); Mondorf-les-Bains (Lux) 1-2 Dinamo Tbilisi (Geo); Petrovac (Mne) 1-3 Zalgiris (Ltu); Caernarfon Town (Wal) 0-5 FCI Levadia (Est); Marsaxlokk (Mal) 0-3 Pyunik (Arm); Hegelmann (Ltu) 1-1 Paide Linnameeskond (Est); Alashkert (Arm) 1-1 Yelimay (Kaz); Stjarnan (Isl) 3-1 Vikingur (Fro); Dila Gori (Geo) 3-1 Virtus (Smr); Sarajevo (Bih) 1-1 Inter Turku (Fin); Europa (Gib) 0-5 Shkendija (Mkd); Nomme Kalju (Est) 1-0 Linfield (Nir); Penybont (Wal) 0-1 FC Santa Coloma (And); NSI (Fro) 1-1 Hamrun Spartans (Mal); Vllaznia (Alb) 2-1 Malisheva (Kos)

First Qualifying Round – 2nd Leg

Jul 14:
La Fiorita (Smr) 0-2 UNA Strassen (Lux) (agg 0-3)

Jul 15:
Decic (Mne) 1-2 Liepaja (Lva) (agg 1-3); Malisheva (Kos) 5-0 Vllaznia (Alb) (agg 6-2)

Jul 16:
BATE Borisov (Blr) 0-0 Elbasani (Alb) (agg 1-1, *AET, BATE Borisov win 5-4 on pens*); Ballkani (Kos) 3-2 Connah's Quay Nomads (Wal) (agg 3-2); Torpedo Kutaisi (Geo) 0-3 Zira (Aze) (agg 0-6); Ilves (Fin) 3-1 Differdange (Lux) (agg 3-1); Milsami Orhei (Mda) 0-1 Velez Mostar (Bih) (agg 1-2); St Joseph's (Gib) 0-0 Bohemians (Irl) (agg 0-2); Astana (Kaz) 1-4 Dinamo City (Alb) (agg 2-4, *AET*); Sileks (Mkd) 0-1 Dinamo Minsk (Blr) (agg 1-1, *AET, Dinamo Minsk win 6-5 on pens*); RFS (Lva) 2-0 Glentoran (Nir) (agg 4-1); Mornar (Mne) 1-2 Atletic Club d'Escaldes (And) (agg 2-4); Dinamo Tbilisi (Geo) 1-1 Mondorf-les-Bains (Lux) (agg 2-1, *AET*); Zalgiris (Ltu) 2-1 Petrovac (Mne) (agg 5-2); FCI Levadia (Est) 5-0 Caernarfon Town (Wal) (agg 10-0); Pyunik (Arm) 1-0 Marsaxlokk (Mal) (agg 4-0); Paide Linnameeskond (Est) 3-0 Hegelmann (Ltu) (agg 4-1); Yelimay (Kaz) 2-2 Alashkert (Arm) (agg 3-3, *AET, Alashkert win 6-5 on pens*); Vikingur (Fro) 2-2 Stjarnan (Isl) (agg 3-5); Virtus (Smr) 1-0 Dila Gori (Geo) (agg 2-3); Inter Turku (Fin) 2-1 Sarajevo (Bih) (agg 3-2); Shkendija (Mkd) 1-0 Europa (Gib) (agg 6-0); Linfield (Nir) 2-2 Nomme Kalju (Est) (agg 2-3); FC Santa Coloma (And) 3-0 Penybont (Wal) (agg 4-0); Hamrun Spartans (Mal) 1-2 NSI (Fro) (agg 2-3)

CONCACAF

2026 LEAGUES CUP

Matchday 1 Fixtures

Aug 4:
Columbus Crew (USA) v Atlas (Mex); FC Cincinnati (USA) v Pachuca (Mex); Charlotte FC (USA) v Pumas UNAM (Mex); Minnesota United (USA) v Juarez (Mex); Tigres UANL (Mex) v Real Salt Lake (USA); Vancouver Whitecaps (Can) v Atlante (Mex)

Aug 5:
Inter Miami (USA) v Atletico San Luis (Mex); Monterrey (Mex) v Orlando City (USA); Nashville SC (USA) v Leon (USA); FC Dallas (USA) v Queretaro (Mex); Los Angeles FC (USA) v Guadalajara (Mex); Toluca (Mex) v Seattle Sounders (USA)

Aug 6:
New York City FC (USA) v Santos Laguna (Mex); Cruz Azul (Mex) v Philadelphia Union (USA); Chicago Fire (USA) v Necaxa (Mex); Austin FC (USA) v Tijuana (Mex); Portland Timbers (USA) v Puebla (Mex); America (Mex) v San Diego FC (USA)

Matchday 2 Fixtures

Aug 7:
Charlotte FC (USA) v Atlas (Mex); Columbus Crew (USA) v Pachuca (Mex); FC Cincinnati (USA) v Pumas UNAM (Mex); Tigres UANL (Mex) v Minnesota United (USA); Vancouver Whitecaps (Can) v Juarez (Mex)

Aug 8:
Orlando City (USA) v Leon (Mex); Inter Miami (USA) v Monterrey (Mex); Guadalajara (Mex) v FC Dallas (USA); Real Salt Lake (USA) v Atlante (Mex); Toluca (Mex) v Los Angeles FC (USA)

Aug 9:
Seattle Sounders (USA) v Queretaro (Mex); Cruz Azul (Mex) v New York City FC (USA); Philadelphia Union (USA) v Necaxa (Mex); Chicago Fire (USA) v Santos Laguna (Mex); Nashville SC (USA) v Atletico San Luis (Mex); Austin FC (USA) v Puebla (Mex); America (Mex) v Portland Timbers (USA); San Diego FC (USA) v Tijuana (Mex)

Matchday 3 Fixtures

Aug 11:
Columbus Crew (USA) v Pumas UNAM (Mex); Charlotte FC (USA) v Pachuca (Mex); FC Cincinnati (USA) v Atlas (Mex); Minnesota United (USA) v Atlante (Mex); Real Salt Lake (USA) v Juarez (Mex); Tigres UANL (Mex) v Vancouver Whitecaps (Can)

Aug 12:
Orlando City (USA) v Atletico San Luis (Mex); Inter Miami (USA) v Leon (Mex); Monterrey (Mex) v Nashville SC (USA); Toluca (Mex) v FC Dallas (USA); Los Angeles FC (USA) v Queretaro (Mex); San Diego FC (USA) v Puebla (Mex); Seattle Sounders (USA) v Guadalajara (Mex)

Aug 13:
Philadelphia Union (USA) v Santos Laguna (Mex); New York City FC (USA) v Necaxa (Mex); Cruz Azul (Mex) v Chicago Fire (USA); America (Mex) v Austin FC (USA); Portland Timbers (USA) v Tijuana (Mex)

• *Knockout stages take place Aug. 25-Sep. 6*

Final Tables 2025-26

ANGUILLA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sugar George Attackers (C)	18	13	2	3	64	16	41
Roaring Lions	18	12	3	3	63	15	39
Doc's United	17	11	2	4	45	20	35
Lymers	18	8	6	4	38	22	30
Uprising	18	8	5	5	48	23	29
Spartans	18	8	3	7	41	24	27
Diamond	18	8	2	8	33	54	26
East Enders	18	4	2	12	24	41	14
Eagle Claw	17	2	1	14	12	97	7
West End Predators	18	1	2	15	21	77	5

ARUBA

Regular Season

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Dakota*	9	9	0	0	45	11	27
Britannia*	9	6	1	2	18	12	19
La Fama*	9	6	0	3	31	13	18
Sporting*	9	5	1	3	36	13	16
Racing Club Aruba*	9	5	0	4	20	12	15
Bubali*	9	4	1	4	27	19	13
Deportivo Nacional**	9	4	0	5	18	13	12
River Plate**	9	2	2	5	17	29	8
Estrella**	9	1	1	7	19	37	4
Real Koyari**	9	0	0	9	3	75	0

**Advance to League Honor Gold stage*
***Enter League Honor Silver stage*

League Honor Gold

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Britannia*	10	8	0	2	17	8	24
Dakota*	10	6	2	2	27	10	20
Sporting*	10	4	1	5	13	24	13
La Fama*	10	3	3	4	15	16	12
Bubali	10	3	3	4	13	17	12
Racing Club Aruba	10	0	3	7	12	22	3

**Advance to next stage*

League Honor Gold Play-Offs

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sporting*	3	1	2	0	4	2	5
Britannia* (C)	3	1	2	0	3	2	5
Dakota	3	1	0	2	2	3	3
La Fama	3	0	2	1	4	6	2

**Advance to League Honor Gold final*

League Honor Gold Final

Jul 17:
Britannia 3-1 Sporting

League Honor Silver Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Deportivo Nacional*	10	10	0	0	59	11	30
Caravel**	10	6	1	3	22	20	19
Atlantico Deportivo**	10	5	0	5	22	14	15
San Nicolas	10	3	1	6	20	30	10
Estudiantes	10	3	0	7	20	36	9
Real Koyari	10	2	0	8	11	43	6

**Advance to League Honor Silver final*
***Enter promotion play-offs*

League Honor Silver Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Caiquetio*	10	5	4	1	18	8	19
River Plate**	10	5	3	2	28	18	18
Estrella**	10	5	2	3	23	23	17
Brazil Juniors	10	4	3	3	18	15	15
Jong Aruba	10	3	4	3	19	16	13
Unistars	10	0	0	10	7	33	0

**Advance to League Honor Silver final*
***Enter promotion play-offs*

League Honor Silver Final

Jun 12:
Deportivo Nacional 2-1 Caiquetio

Promotion Play-Offs

Jun 24:
Caravel 1-6 Estrella

• *Promotion play-off between River Plate and Atlantico Deportivo was delayed and yet to take place at the time of writing*

ASIA

2025–26 ASEAN CLUB CHAMPIONSHIP

Group A

Aug 20:
Dynamic Herb Cebu (Phi) 1-3 Tampines Rovers (Sgp); Buriram United (Tha) 1-1 Selangor (Mas); BG Pathum United (Tha) 2-1 Cong An Hanoi (Vie)

Sep 24:
BG Pathum United (Tha) 2-2 Buriram United (Tha); Cong An Hanoi (Vie) 1-0 Dynamic Herb Cebu (Phi); Selangor (Mas) 4-2 Tampines Rovers (Sgp)

Dec 3:
Buriram United (Tha) 1-1 Cong An Hanoi (Vie); Tampines Rovers (Sgp) 3-2 BG Pathum United (Tha); Dynamic Herb Cebu (Phi) 1-1 Selangor (Mas)

Jan 28:
Tampines Rovers (Sgp) 1-4 Buriram United (Tha); BG Pathum United (Tha) 2-0 Dynamic Herb Cebu (Phi); Selangor (Mas) 2-0 Cong An Hanoi (Vie)

Feb 4:
Buriram United (Tha) 6-0 Dynamic Herb Cebu (Phi); Selangor (Mas) 1-1 BG Pathum United (Tha); Cong An Hanoi (Vie) 6-1 Tampines Rovers (Sgp)

Final Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Buriram United*	5	2	3	0	14	5	9
Selangor*	5	2	3	0	9	5	9
BG Pathum United	5	2	2	1	9	7	8
Cong An Hanoi	5	2	1	2	9	6	7
Tampines Rovers	5	2	0	3	10	17	6
Dynamic Herb Cebu	5	0	1	4	2	13	1

**Advance to next round*

Group B

Aug 21:
Johor Darul Ta'zim (Mas) 3-1 Lion City Sailors (Sgp); Shan United (Mya) 0-3 PKR Svay Rieng (Cam)

Sep 25:
Johor Darul Ta'zim (Mas) 4-0 Bangkok United (Tha); Nam Dinh (Vie) 2-1 PKR Svay Rieng (Cam)

Dec 4:
Bangkok United (Tha) 2-2 Lion City Sailors (Sgp); PKR Svay Rieng (Cam) 2-2 Johor Darul Ta'zim (Mas); Shan United (Mya) 0-3 Nam Dinh (Vie)

Dec 17:
Bangkok United (Tha) 1-4 Nam Dinh (Vie); Lion City Sailors (Sgp) 3-2 Shan United (Mya)

Jan 29:
Johor Darul Ta'zim (Mas) 3-0 Shan United (Mya); Nam Dinh (Vie) 3-0 Lion City Sailors (Sgp)

Feb 5:
Bangkok United (Tha) 2-1 Shan United (Mya); Nam Dinh (Vie) 1-1 Johor Darul Ta'zim (Mas); Lion City Sailors (Sgp) 0-2 PKR Svay Rieng (Cam)

Apr 22:
PKR Svay Rieng (Cam) 1-1 Bangkok United (Tha)

Final Standings

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nam Dinh*	5	4	1	0	13	3	13
Johor Darul Ta'zim*	5	3	2	0	13	4	11
PKR Svay Rieng	5	2	2	1	9	5	8
Bangkok United	5	1	2	2	6	12	5
Lion City Sailors	5	1	1	3	6	12	4
Shan United	5	0	0	5	3	14	0

*Advance to next round

Semi-Finals – 1st Leg

May 6 – Petaling Jaya
Selangor (Mas) 2 (Chrigor 38, 58)
Nam Dinh (Vie) 1 (Nguyen Van Vi 45+1)

May 6 – Johor Bahru
Johor Darul Ta'zim (Mas) 1 (Aketxe 90+2)
Buriram United (Tha) 3 (Bissoli 34, 90+4, Causic 45+2)

Semi-Finals – 2nd Leg

May 13 – Buriram
Nam Dinh (Vie) 0
Selangor (Mas) 2 (Chrigor 40 pen, 90)
Selangor win 4-1 on aggregate

May 13 – Ninh Binh
Buriram United (Tha) 1 (Schindler 98)
Johor Darul Ta'zim (Mas) 2 (Bergson 45+9 pen, Guilherme 62)
After Extra-Time;
Buriram United win 4-3 on aggregate

Final – 1st Leg

May 20 – Petaling Jaya
Selangor (Mas) 0
Buriram United (Tha) 1 (Suphanat 25)

Final – 2nd Leg

May 27 – Buriram
Buriram United (Tha) 2 (Suphanat 27, Theerathon 55)
Selangor (Mas) 1 (Bashah 18)
Buriram United win 3-1 on aggregate

Final Tables 2025-26

KUWAIT

Regular Season

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Kuwait	18	13	5	0	46	10	44
Al Qadsia	18	9	5	4	32	14	32
Kazma	18	8	6	4	22	17	30
Al Arabi	18	8	6	4	28	13	30
Al Salmiya	18	8	6	4	21	12	30
Al Fahaheel	18	6	3	9	20	35	21
Al Tadamon	18	5	3	10	16	28	18
Al Shabab	18	4	6	8	12	33	18
Al Nasar	18	4	4	10	17	24	16
Al Jahra	18	2	2	14	11	39	8

• *Top six advance to championship round, bottom four enter relegation round with points obtained during regular season carried over in full*

Championship Round

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Kuwait (C)	23	15	8	0	56	15	53
Al Arabi	23	11	6	6	37	16	39
Al Qadsia	23	11	6	6	38	20	39
Kazma	23	10	8	5	27	20	38
Al Salmiya	23	10	7	6	29	22	37
Al Fahaheel	23	6	4	13	21	46	22

Relegation Round

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Tadamon	21	6	4	11	19	32	22
Al Nasar	21	5	6	10	22	26	21
Al Shabab	21	5	6	10	16	39	21
Al Jahra	21	3	3	15	14	42	12

• *No relegation due to expansion of Kuwaiti Premier League for 2026-27 season*

SYRIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Al Ittihad Ahli (C)	30	22	7	1	83	25	73
Homs Al Fidaa	30	22	6	2	55	12	72
Al Wahda	30	19	5	6	53	24	62
Al Karamah	30	17	7	6	55	30	58
Al Taliya	30	12	11	7	32	24	47
Hutteen	30	13	6	11	33	37	45
Tishreen	30	11	11	8	42	34	44
Al Jaish	30	10	11	9	23	30	41
Damascus Al Ahli	30	11	6	13	37	44	39
Huriah	30	10	5	15	30	34	35
Al Shorta	30	8	9	13	29	47	33
Fotuwa	30	9	3	18	36	53	30
Omaya	30	5	9	16	27	44	24
Khan Shaykhun	30	6	5	19	26	53	23
Jableh (R)	30	6	4	20	27	60	22
Al Shouleh (R)	30	4	5	21	14	51	17

AFRICA

Final Tables 2025-26

BENIN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sobemap (C)	34	20	7	7	33	19	67
Coton	34	17	11	6	41	22	62
ASPAC	34	16	12	6	47	23	60
Loto-Popo	34	17	7	10	39	23	58
Buffles du Borgou	34	13	12	9	33	23	51
Dynamo Abomey	34	12	13	9	26	24	49
Cotonou	34	11	14	9	25	20	47
Espoir	34	12	11	11	33	35	47
Damissa	34	10	15	9	35	36	45
Hodio	34	10	13	11	37	33	43
ASVO	34	11	9	14	28	31	42
Ayema	34	9	13	12	19	20	40
Bani Ganse	34	8	15	11	27	31	39
Krake	34	8	15	11	33	38	39
Dragons	34	9	10	15	31	45	37
Cavaliers	34	8	12	14	28	37	36
JS Pobe (R)	34	7	14	13	31	36	35
Dadje (R)	34	3	6	25	25	76	15

CAMEROON

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Colombe (C)	26	16	7	3	47	13	55
Dynamo Douala	26	17	4	5	54	25	55
Unisport Bafang	26	15	4	7	44	37	49
Cotonsport	26	12	8	6	37	23	44
Canon Yaounde	26	10	9	7	31	20	39
Panthere	26	10	5	11	32	26	35
Bamenda	26	10	4	12	41	42	34
Victoria United	26	10	3	13	33	42	33
Gazelle	26	9	6	11	24	29	33
Stade Renard	26	7	10	9	36	38	31
Aigle Moungo	26	8	6	12	25	38	30
Aigle Royal	26	7	8	11	30	33	29
Fortuna Mfou* (R)	26	5	6	15	20	48	21
Fauve Azur Elite (R)	26	5	2	19	17	57	17

*Enter promotion-relegation play-off

Promotion-Relegation Play-Off

Jul 1:
APEJES Academy 2-0 Fortuna Mfou

CAPE VERDE

Regular Season

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Palmeira* (C)	6	5	1	0	12	3	16
Mindelense*	6	5	0	1	13	4	15
Academica Porto Novo*	6	4	1	1	9	4	13
Africa Show*	6	3	3	0	11	5	12
Boavista da Praia	6	4	0	2	9	4	12
Cutelinho	6	2	3	1	5	4	9
ACA	6	2	1	3	6	7	7
Onze Unidos	6	1	2	3	9	10	5
Santo Crucifixo	6	1	2	3	5	10	5
Benfica	6	1	0	5	3	18	3
Atletico de Sao Nicolau	6	0	2	4	4	10	2
Scorpion Vermelho	6	0	1	5	4	11	1

*Advance to next stage

Semi-Finals

Jun 20:
Africa Show 1-0 Palmeira;
Academica Porto Novo 2-2 Mindelense

Jun 27:
Palmeira 2-1 Africa Show (agg 2-2, *Palmeira win 4-2 on pens*);
Mindelense 2-1 Academica Porto Novo (agg 4-3)

Final

Jul 4:
Palmeira 2-2 Mindelense
(*Palmeira win 3-2 on pens*)

CHAD

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Aiglons Ndjamena (C)	22	18	4	0	72	7	58
AS PSI	22	17	2	3	44	14	53
Elect Sport	22	15	4	3	50	17	49
AS Sante d'Abeche	22	11	3	8	31	26	36
UDM	22	8	7	7	24	26	31
Espoir	22	7	9	6	23	24	30
Eland de Derby	22	7	6	9	29	30	27
Aiglons Hadjer Lamis	22	4	7	11	15	29	19
Onape de Doba	22	4	5	13	19	44	17
Elephant d'Am Timan	22	4	5	13	16	41	17
Foullah Edifice*	22	3	6	13	12	41	15
Scorpion de Borkou (R)	22	4	2	16	23	59	14

*Enter promotion-relegation play-off
(incomplete at the time of writing)

COMOROS

Ndzuani Group

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Gombessa Sport*	18	11	4	3	23	11	37
Steal Nouvel	18	11	4	3	34	14	37
Djomakawe	18	9	3	6	30	22	30
M'rango Club	18	8	5	5	28	22	29
Komorozine	18	8	1	9	25	26	25
Chirazienne	18	7	2	9	23	21	23
Beresse de Sima	18	6	3	9	17	24	21
Ngazi Sport**	18	6	3	9	20	30	21
Etoile d'Or (R)	18	6	2	10	27	33	20
Daoueni (R)	18	3	3	12	12	36	12

*Advance to next stage
**Enter promotion-relegation play-off
(incomplete at the time of writing)

Mwali Group

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fomboni*	14	10	2	2	32	9	32
Ouragan	14	7	3	4	15	7	24
Etoile du Centre	14	6	4	4	17	10	22
Belle Lumiere	14	6	3	5	17	20	21
Nouvel Espoir de Wanani	13	5	6	2	13	9	21
Wemani Espoir	13	4	4	5	11	14	16
Silex de Miringoni (R)	14	3	1	10	11	27	10
Kangani Sport (R)	14	2	1	11	9	29	7

*Advance to next stage

Ngazidja Group

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Volcan Club*	22	14	5	3	35	11	47
Atomic Ngome	22	13	6	3	39	16	45
US Zilimadjou	22	11	6	5	31	12	39
Djabal	22	8	6	8	25	22	30
Elan Club	22	8	5	9	28	31	29
Amical Club	22	6	9	7	27	29	27
Etoile des Comores	22	8	2	12	27	36	26
Angelus Club	22	6	8	8	19	23	26
FC Male	22	6	7	9	23	30	25
Hantsindzi**	22	7	4	11	20	31	25
Alize Fort (R)	22	5	9	8	20	24	24
US Mbeni (R)	22	5	3	14	21	50	18

*Advance to next stage
**Enter promotion-relegation play-off
(incomplete at the time of writing)

Championship Group

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Fomboni (C)	2	1	1	0	2	0	4
Volcan Club	2	1	1	0	2	1	4
Gombessa Sport	2	0	0	2	1	4	0

DR CONGO

Group A

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TP Mazembe*	30	23	4	3	57	12	73
Saint-Eloi Lupopo*	30	19	6	5	55	27	63
Don Bosco*	30	16	8	6	43	24	56
Simba*	30	14	8	8	33	27	50
Manika	30	12	12	6	31	20	48
Tanganyika	30	13	5	12	38	32	44
Lubumbashi Sport	30	11	10	9	27	26	43
Blessing FC	30	11	7	12	33	31	40
Sanga Balende	30	10	6	14	25	34	36
Saint-Luc	30	9	8	13	21	33	35
Malole	30	9	6	15	34	39	33
New Soger	30	9	6	15	29	40	33
Tshinkunku (R)	30	7	10	13	23	41	31
Groupe Bazano (R)	30	7	9	14	26	38	30
Tshikas (R)	30	6	10	14	25	40	28
Panda B52 (R)	30	5	1	24	17	59	16

*Advance to next stage

Group B

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Maniema Union*	26	13	12	1	37	9	51
Les Aigles du Congo*	26	14	7	5	33	15	49
AS Vita Club*	26	12	11	3	34	13	47
Celeste*	26	13	7	6	41	13	46
Dauphin Noir	26	13	6	7	35	20	45
Anges Verts	26	7	11	8	27	29	32
Rangers	26	8	8	10	24	33	32
Etoile du Kivu	26	9	4	13	27	39	31
New JAK FC	26	6	11	9	20	26	29
FC Renaissance du Congo	26	4	13	9	20	38	25
OC Renaissance du Congo	26	4	10	12	14	33	22
Bukavu-Dawa (R)	26	3	8	15	12	33	17
Motema Pembe (R)	26	8	13	5	33	23	13
FC MK (R)	26	4	7	15	12	45	7
Martin Pecheur (R)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

*Advance to next stage

Championship Round

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
TP Mazembe (C)	14	9	3	2	25	7	30
Les Aigles du Congo	14	8	5	1	21	10	29
Maniema Union	14	7	2	5	16	16	23
AS Vita Club	14	5	4	5	11	12	19
Saint-Eloi Lupopo	14	4	6	4	11	9	18
Don Bosco	14	4	5	5	13	17	17
Simba	14	2	5	7	9	18	11
Celeste	14	0	4	10	8	25	4

ETHIOPIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Sidama Bunna (C)	38	19	11	8	43	23	68
Negele Arsi	38	15	15	8	37	30	60
Mechal	38	14	15	9	44	31	57
Fasil Kenema	38	14	13	11	28	28	55
Ethio Electric	38	13	15	10	32	26	54
Kidus Giorgis	38	14	12	12	33	31	54

Wolaita Dicha	38	11	18	9	37	31	51
Ethiopia Bunna	38	13	12	13	40	39	51
Hawassa	38	12	14	12	37	32	50
Sheger Ketema	38	11	17	10	34	31	50
Bahir Dar Kenema	38	9	21	8	28	28	48
Hadiya Hossana	38	11	15	12	31	35	48
Ethiopia Nigd Bank	38	11	14	13	45	45	47
Ethiopian Insurance	38	10	16	12	30	31	46
Adama City	38	10	16	12	35	39	46
Wolwalo Adigrat	38	10	16	12	32	36	46
Midre Genet Shire	38	9	15	14	24	32	42
Dire Dawa (R)	38	9	15	14	27	41	42
Mekele 70 Enderta (R)	38	8	16	14	26	38	40
Arba Minche (R)	38	7	14	17	30	46	35

GABON

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Mangasport (C)	26	19	1	6	51	21	58
Stade Mandji	26	17	4	5	41	16	55
Vautour	26	13	6	7	33	22	45
Oyem	26	13	4	9	38	25	43
Centre Mberie Sportif	26	11	9	6	31	20	42
Ogooue	26	12	5	9	36	32	41
Oyem	26	11	6	9	33	27	39
FC 105	26	12	2	12	35	35	38
Stade Migoveen	26	10	7	9	27	26	37
Lambarene	26	9	6	11	38	31	33
Lozo Sports	26	7	7	12	22	27	28
Bitam	26	7	4	15	23	55	25
Bouenguidi (R)	26	3	11	12	22	34	20
Dikaki (R)	26	1	2	23	15	74	5

GAMBIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Medina United (C)	30	16	6	8	34	25	54
Fortune	30	14	11	5	33	21	53
Gambia Ports Authority	30	12	11	7	26	18	47
Bombada	30	11	11	8	36	32	44
Brikama United	30	11	10	9	37	33	43
Real Banjul	30	9	14	7	30	25	41
BST Galaxy	30	9	12	9	29	32	39
Hart Academy	30	9	11	10	36	34	38
Team Rhino	30	9	10	11	26	29	37
Falcons	30	7	14	9	19	24	35
Dutch Lions	30	7	13	10	33	33	34
Greater Tomorrow	30	8	10	12	25	35	34
Hawks	30	7	12	11	25	31	33
TMT*	30	7	12	11	20	29	33
Samger (R)	30	6	14	10	23	27	32
Steve Biko (R)	30	5	15	10	24	28	30

Enter promotion-relegation play-off (incomplete at the time of writing)

MADAGASCAR

North Group

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
COSFA*	12	8	3	1	32	17	27
AJESAIA*	12	7	3	2	20	11	24
FC Rouge*	12	5	4	3	18	10	19
SOM/Fosa Juniors*	12	4	6	2	19	16	18
TGBC Academie	12	4	3	5	14	14	15
Tsaramandroso Formation	12	3	3	6	16	25	12
Clinique Zanatany	12	0	0	12	13	39	0

*Advance to next stage

South Group

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Disciples*	14	10	3	1	32	11	33
Elgeco Plus*	14	7	6	1	21	13	27
Avenir Sainte-Anne*	14	7	3	4	22	23	24
CFFA* (C)	14	6	4	4	24	17	22
Mama	14	5	4	5	15	16	19
USCAFoot	14	3	5	6	13	15	14
Antimo Record	14	3	1	10	14	28	10
COSPN	14	1	2	11	16	34	5

*Advance to next stage

Quarter-Finals

May 16:
Avenir Sainte-Anne 1-2 AJESAIA

May 17:
FC Rouge 1-0 Elgeco Plus;
SOM/Fosa Juniors 0-4 Disciples

May 23:
Disciples 1-0 SOM/Fosa Juniors (agg 5-0)

May 28:
Elgeco Plus 1-0 FC Rouge
(agg 1-1, *Elgeco Plus win 4-2 on pens*)

Jun 3:
COSFA 1-2 CFFA (*played over one leg only*);
AJESAIA 0-0 Avenir Sainte-Anne (agg 2-1)

Semi-Finals

Jun 13:
AJESAIA 1-0 Disciples

Jun 14:
CFFA 2-1 Elgeco Plus

Jun 20:
Disciples 1-0 AJESAIA
(agg 1-1, *AJESAIA win 6-5 on pens*);

Jun 21:
Elgeco Plus 1-1 CFFA (agg 2-3)

Final

Jun 28:
AJESAIA 1-2 CFFA

MALI

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Djoliba (C)	26	18	5	3	41	12	59
Stade Malien	26	14	8	4	28	15	50
Real Bamako	26	14	7	5	32	14	49
Diarra	26	13	5	8	32	24	44
Binga	26	12	7	7	28	15	43
USFAS	26	12	6	8	37	27	42
Korofina	26	9	6	11	28	31	33
Bougouba	26	8	7	11	21	34	31
Derby Academie	26	5	14	7	19	22	29
Bakary-Djan	26	6	9	11	20	27	27
Afrique Foot Elite	26	7	6	13	23	38	27
Onze Createurs	26	6	8	12	16	24	26
Mali Coura (R)	26	4	8	14	20	31	20
Bougouni (R)	26	4	4	18	12	43	16

MOROCCO

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Maghreb Fez (C)	30	16	11	3	40	17	59
RS Berkane	30	16	9	5	44	27	57
Raja	30	16	8	6	39	19	56
AS FAR	30	13	16	1	45	22	55
Wydad	30	13	4	13	39	33	43
DH Jadida	30	9	13	8	30	34	40
IR Tanger	30	9	12	9	27	31	39
FUS Rabat	30	9	10	11	31	36	37
COD Meknes	30	9	9	12	24	33	36
KAC Marrakech	30	8	12	10	27	26	36
RCA Zemamra	30	8	9	13	28	37	33
HUS Agadir	30	8	9	13	27	39	33
UTS Rabat	30	6	13	11	32	40	31
Olympique Dcheira	30	7	9	14	29	40	30
US Yacoub Mansour (R)	30	7	9	14	34	44	30
OC Safi (R)	30	3	13	14	24	42	22

NIGER

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Nigelec (C)	30	20	6	4	48	24	66
Gendarmerie	30	17	9	4	49	17	60
AS FAN	30	16	7	7	38	24	55
Police	30	15	9	6	41	19	54
AS GNN	30	14	11	5	38	21	53
Douanes	30	12	11	7	33	21	47
Sahel	30	12	3	15	21	23	39
Espoir	30	9	10	11	31	35	37
AS ZAM	30	10	7	13	39	46	37
Tahoua	30	10	5	15	36	51	35
Tagour Provincial Club	30	7	12	11	32	41	33
Urana	30	8	8	14	28	36	32
Liberte	30	7	11	12	28	46	32
AS UAM	30	8	7	15	25	34	31
Olympic (R)	30	5	10	15	24	44	25
Renaissance (R)	30	3	8	19	21	50	17

SIERRA LEONE

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Bo Rangers (C)	34	17	13	4	39	20	64
Star Sport Academy	34	16	13	5	45	22	61
Bai Bureh Warriors	34	14	15	5	40	20	57
East End Lions	34	13	14	7	52	36	53
Old Edwardians	34	13	14	7	39	23	53
Ports Authority	34	12	13	9	35	30	49
Kamboi Eagles	34	13	6	15	34	38	45
Bhantal	34	9	16	9	40	29	43
Wilberforce Strikers	34	9	16	9	27	30	43
FC Kallon	34	12	7	15	38	52	43
Diamond Stars	34	11	9	14	34	39	42
Bullom Stars	34	12	6	16	30	44	42
Mighty Blackpool	34	10	11	13	28	37	41
Wusum Stars	34	11	8	15	24	36	41
Abacha City (R)	34	9	12	13	31	38	39
SLIFA (R)	34	9	11	14	36	41	38
Luawa (R)	34	8	9	17	22	42	33
Freetown City (R)	34	6	11	17	30	47	29

SOUTH SUDAN

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
El Merriekh Bentiu (C)	26	20	4	2	78	22	64
Jamus	26	19	4	3	72	16	61
Malakia	26	15	6	5	51	28	51
Al Ghazala	26	16	1	9	66	46	49
Holy Family	26	15	3	8	52	33	48
Kator	26	13	6	7	40	26	45
Atlabara	26	11	4	11	34	43	37
Wajuma	26	10	2	14	39	45	32
Koryom	26	7	5	14	47	69	26
Olympic	26	8	2	16	26	53	26
Salam Aweil	26	6	7	13	36	60	25
Al Hilal Wau	26	5	6	15	40	41	21
Bentiu City (R)	26	6	3	17	36	78	21
Lion Hunters (R)	26	3	3	20	32	89	12

TANZANIA

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
Young Africans (C)	30	23	6	1	71	9	75
Simba	30	22	7	1	54	11	73
Azam	30	18	10	2	46	12	64
Singida Black Stars	30	15	5	10	47	35	50
TRA United	30	11	10	9	33	28	43
JKT	30	10	12	8	30	33	42
Pamba Jiji	30	9	9	12	32	35	36
Coastal Union	30	9	9	12	31	37	36
Dodoma Jiji	30	8	11	11	25	36	35
Namungo	30	7	13	10	25	32	34
Mashujaa	30	7	12	11	15	27	33
Singida Fountain Gate	30	9	6	15	25	44	33
Tanzania Prisons* (R)	30	9	5	16	23	41	32
Mbeya City*	30	7	9	14	24	41	30
Mtibwa Sugar (R)	30	6	9	15	25	48	27
Kinondoni (R)	30	2	3	25	16	53	9

Enter promotion-relegation play-offs

Promotion-Relegation Play-Offs

Semi-Finals – 1st Leg

Jun 28:
Mbeya Kwanza 0-4 Polisi Tanzania

Jul 5:
Mbeya City 2-0 Tanzania Prisons

Semi-Finals – 2nd Leg

Jul 5:
Polisi Tanzania 3-1 Mbeya Kwanza* (agg 7-1)
**Mbeya Kwanza remain in second tier*

Jul 8:
Tanzania Prisons 0-0 Mbeya City* (agg 0-2)
**Mbeya City remain in top flight*

Final – 1st Leg

Jul 12:
Polisi Tanzania 4-0 Tanzania Prisons

Final – 2nd Leg

Jul 16:
Tanzania Prisons 1-0 Polisi Tanzania (agg 1-4)
• *Polisi Tanzania promoted, Tanzania Prisons relegated*

ZANZIBAR

	P	W	D	L	F	A	Pts
KVZ (C)	30	21	4	5	60	31	67
JKU	30	19	7	4	55	18	64
Zimamoto	30	15	8	7	33	21	53
Mlandege	30	15	7	8	46	25	52
Uhamiaji	30	15	6	9	46	27	51
Fufuni	30	14	6	10	43	30	48
KMKM	30	13	5	12	49	29	44
Kipanga	30	11	11	8	40	30	44
Mafunzo	30	10	12	8	34	28	42
Muembe Makumbi City	30	11	9	10	37	33	42
Polisi	30	12	5	13	37	29	41
Chipukizi	30	11	7	12	34	32	40
New King (R)	30	10	7	13	35	46	37
Malindi (R)	30	6	7	17	22	49	25
Junguni United (R)	30	2	4	24	23	106	10
New Stone Town (R)	30	2	1	27	22	82	7

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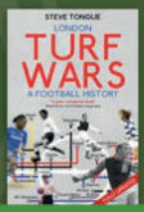

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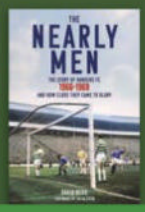
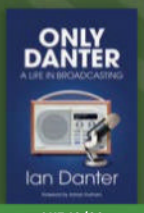


OUT 10/08



OUT 10/08

OUT 24/08

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OUT 31/08

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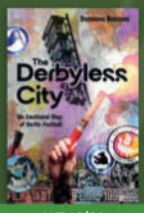
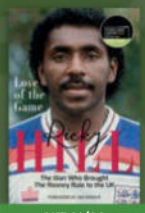


OUT 14/09

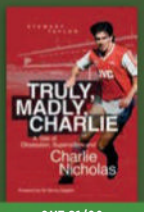
OUT 14/09

OUT 21/09



OUT 21/09

OUT 21/09



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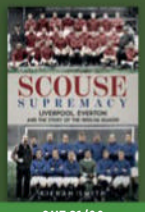

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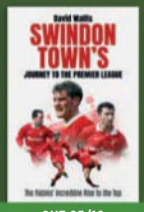

OUT 05/10

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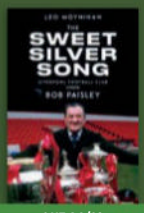
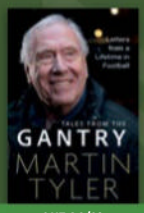
OUT 12/10

OUT 12/10

OUT 26/10



OUT 26/10



OUT 26/10

OUT 30/11

OUT 30/11

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